808.83 W67
Williams, Blanche Colton,
Short stories for college clas
PZ1 .W67Sh
000
040101
D 1977 00E
Carl A. Rudisi

808.83
W67

10022

WITHDRAWN
L. I. COLLEGE LIBRARY

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2024

https://archive.org/details/stanfordshortsto0000stan

SHORT STORIES
FOR COLLEGE CLASSES

Lenoir Rhyne College
LIBRARY

SHORT STORIES
FOR COLLEGE CLASSES

SELECTED BY TEACHERS OF NARRATION IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH, HUNTER COLLEGE OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

EDITED BY

BLANCHE COLTON WILLIAMS, PH.D.
PROFESSOR AND HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT
AUTHOR OF "A HANDBOOK ON STORY WRITING"

NEW YORK
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY
1929

COPYRIGHT, 1929, BY
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY

808.83
W67

10022

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

PREFACE

A COLLECTION of short stories usually serves one or more of several purposes. It may, like William Dean Howells's *The Great American Short Stories,* offer an assemblage of masterpieces. It may, like Frances Newman's *The Short Story's Mutations,* illustrate the evolution of this brief narrative form, from Petronius to Morand; or, like the present editor's *A Book of Short Stories,* illustrate the evolution in America, from 1825 to the present. It may represent the countries in which the form has flourished, as do Clark and Lieber's *Great Short Stories of the World* and Lieber and Williams's *Great Stories of All Nations;* or it may represent sections of one country, as does Ramsay's *Short Stories of America.* Some collections accomplish a number of these aims. Remembering, however, the fate of the chameleon that was placed on plaid, the collectors of stories for this volume have not tried to achieve too much but have been guided by another purpose, to which any one of these purposes is incidental. The collaborators in selection, teachers of narrative composition to freshmen, have chosen stories most of which, besides being worthy in themselves, have proved stimulating and helpful to the inexperienced writer.

Varied as the specimens are, all exemplify the chief phases of story technique, to which attention is directed in the pages "To the Student."

The editor, who is alone responsible for the preparation of the volume, hereby heartily thanks her colleagues who nominated stories for inclusion.

BLANCHE COLTON WILLIAMS

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

THE editor wishes to thank all authors, agents, editors, and publishers through whose coöperation this collection is possible.

CONTENTS

		PAGE
PREFACE		v
TO THE STUDENT		xi
THE LONG TRYST	*Samuel Hopkins Adams*	1
I'M A FOOL	*Sherwood Anderson*	16
NEVER IN THIS WORLD	*Stephen Morehouse Avery*	27
PETER PROJECTS	*Mariel Brady*	42
A DAY OFF	*Alice Brown*	59
ZENOBIA'S INFIDELITY	*H. C. Bunner*	70
THE SPIRAL STONE	*Arthur Colton*	81
THE MOST DANGEROUS GAME	*Richard Connell*	85
THE TRAWLER	*James B. Connolly*	106
THE BRUTE	*Joseph Conrad*	127
A MAYOR AND HIS PEOPLE	*Theodore Dreiser*	147
THE PROCURATOR OF JUDÆA	*Anatole France*	166
WHITE BREAD	*Zona Gale*	179
A MUNICIPAL REPORT	*O. Henry*	201
THE REAL THING	*Henry James*	216
THE SECOND EGG	*Elise Jean Jerard*	240
GOOD OLD UNCLE HOMER	*Nunnally Johnson*	255
INNOCENCE	*Rose Wilder Lane*	271
TWO FRIENDS	*Guy de Maupassant*	284
THE CASK OF AMONTILLADO	*Edgar Allan Poe*	291
PRELUDE	*Edgar Valentine Smith*	298
BLUE MURDER	*Wilbur Daniel Steele*	315
A TALE OF NEGATIVE GRAVITY	*Frank Stockton*	336
THE LITTLE GIRL FROM TOWN	*Ruth Suckow*	356
"LITTLE GENTLEMAN"	*Booth Tarkington*	374
THE STOLEN BACILLUS	*H. G. Wells*	390
BUFORD	*Millard Fillmore Williams*	397
NOTES		405

TO THE STUDENT

A SHORT story is a narrative presenting characters in a struggle or complication having a definite outcome. The struggle may be physical: for example, the bull and stallion fight in "Buford," or the battle between Penrod and his momentary enemies in "Little Gentleman." The conflict may be one of wits, such as that between the mayor and his opponents in "A Mayor and His People"; it may be one between man and the forces of nature, as in "A Tale of Negative Gravity"; it may be one between man and the social order, as in "Prelude."

Name and classify the struggles in all the stories of this volume, and try to determine the relation between conflict and literary worth.

The short story may be developed about a struggle only, as in "Buford"; but it permits a simple complication, one resulting from the interweaving of two lines of interest. "A Tale of Negative Gravity" has, besides the main interest mentioned above, the subordinate interest of the love story. "A Day Off" has a similar secondary line of interest.

What complications of plot do you find in this collection?

Most critics insist that a short story shall have unity of action, unity of tone, and shall produce a single effect. The action in "The Cask of Amontillado," for instance, is directed to a single end, the tone is ominous from the first sentence to the close, and the effect is one of sardonic horror. This narrative also conforms to the Greek unities of time and place; the action occurs within a few hours in Rome—a street and the catacombs of the Montresors.

Discuss all these stories with respect to the requirements just mentioned.

In "The Brute" the action covers a number of years. Conrad appears to contract the period by putting the story into the

mouth of a narrator, who sums it up for a small gathering. "The Brute" is, in short, an example of the so-called "rehearsed" story. The action of "The Long Tryst" covers a century. The author relates only those details which are significant for the climax, relegating to "back action" the earlier happenings. "A Mayor and His People" details a conflict that lasted many years; but by touching only the several climaxes or peaks of the struggle, the author avoids tediousness and gains compactness.

What other devices do you find herein illustrated, by which the time element is apparently contracted to the greater tensity or better construction of the story?

Some short stories produce a strong emotional effect upon the reader. "Never in This World" draws tears; death, the saddest thing, is saddest when a loved one is left to mourn. Grief of mother for son is as old as the sorrow of Mary; grief of father for son was celebrated even earlier in the story of David and Absalom; grief of father for daughter was epitomized in the woe of Jephtha. If the author can touch the springs of pity or sympathy, he is so far successful.

Consider the emotional appeal made by Hugh Glynn's sacrifice; that made by the humbling of Conrad Hoor's overbearing nature; that made by the doom of Susan. Are you moved to wonder or to sympathy in reading "The Spiral Stone"? What reactions are yours to "A Day Off" and "White Bread"?

Fear, the one uncontrollable passion, is responsible for the thrill produced by such stories as "The Most Dangerous Game" and "Blue Murder." The writer who appeals to this passion uses generously those objects, characters, and acts that cause fear; he invents dangerous situations; he details aspects of death which cause not sympathy but shudders. "The Most Dangerous Game," a tragi-comedy, preserves Rainsford through breath-taking episodes and brings him to a happy end; "Blue Murder," a melodrama (or is it a tragedy?), inspires revulsion of feeling against Camden, whose fratricidal murders, followed by his own death, appal and terrify.

Consider stories meant primarily to thrill or shock, and name the strongest contributory details to the reaction sought by their authors. Why is the omen or sign effective in this class of stories?

Laughter, it is said, arises from some incongruity, some unexpected reversal or turning of the tables, which strikes the exuberant reader's sense of superiority. Such incongruity and reversal in "Peter Projects," "Good Old Uncle Homer," and "Little Gentleman," in all of which the tables are turned against the adult, are funny to the reader who knows himself superior to Mrs. Bayard Livingston Jones, Uncle Homer, or Mr. Kinosling.

What are the causes for smiles in "A Tale of Negative Gravity"? "The Stolen Bacillus"? "Zenobia's Infidelity"? Why are unconscious objects of irony—Mr. Kinosling, for instance, or Wells's anarchist—particularly amusing?

Some stories appeal to the intellect, with an almost total disregard of emotional challenge. They may report a case, in journalistic or realistic fashion, as "I'm a Fool" and "A Mayor and His People" state, respectively, the cases of the swipe and the mayor. They may establish an hypothesis or prove a thesis, as "The Real Thing" so featly proves its paradox that in art the represented thing is more real than the real. Others happily combine the attack on both thought and feeling; "The Brute" horrifies by its climax, at the same time it leaves the reader speculating over the theme of anthropomorphism.

What stories in this volume secure, first of all, an intellectual reaction?

The art of suggestion or implication is the first tool of the short-story writer, for by its means he chisels a tale in which the reader becomes collaborator. Every reader likes—whether he knows it or not—to help create the story. "The Long Tryst" nowhere states just how Laurie of 1912 was bound up with Laurie of 1812, yet the action strongly suggests an instance of metempsychosis. O. Henry does not state who killed Major Caswell, but he suggests the killer, even to the dullest reader. "The Spiral Stone" reveals through suggestion, more than the actual words reveal, the relations between Vane and Ellen Mercer.

Mention suggestion of various kinds throughout all these stories.

To suggestion is closely related the principle of selection. Those facts of the story should be told, and only those facts, which contribute to the rounded perfection of the whole. If the

author begins near the climax, as in "The Spiral Stone," he may by one or two suggestive details rationalize his climax for a past however remote. "The Long Tryst," just cited for suggestive power, selects the most poignant details for emphasizing that power. Conrad offers salient details, seriatim, for convincing the reader the *Apse Family* was a brute. Poe does not mention the injuries or even the insult, specifically, but Montresor's punishment of Fortunato suggests their nature.

Point out examples of wise selection in these stories. Do you find any omission of details you would like to see presented? Should you, for instance, like to read an account of the final hand-to-hand fight between Rainsford and the General?

With suggestion and selection is bound up the principle of proportion, sometimes spoken as the third leg of the stool. Kipling calls it the Holy Law. Proportion demands a pleasing relation of parts throughout the story organism; and as few human bodies are perfectly proportioned, so few short stories are perfect in this particular. The beginning may be top-heavy; the writer sets out with a fine concern for detail and after a few pages progresses too baldly; or he may tell too much, losing the reader's interest through failure to make him a collaborator in construction; he may arrive at a disappointing end through failure to point the way. The unique quality of "The Procurator of Judæa" depends upon Anatole France's unusual proportion of parts, satisfying only in connection with the final sentence—a sentence that relies upon suggestion for its illumination of all that precedes.

Which of these stories do you find most pleasing in proportion?

The story, like all other forms of fiction, may bear evidence of relation to the author's external life. "I'm a Fool" is cut, obviously, from stuff of the real; the story is, we say, realistic, and Anderson's testimony in "A Story Teller's Story" confirms the evidence. "Peter Projects" could have been written by nobody unfamiliar with grade school children, based as it is on the characters of those children seen through kindly, humorous eyes. Again, the story may represent a dream of the author, an outlet of escape, a theory, a way of looking at life, quite detached from his external life. One author depends largely upon outer experi-

ence, another depends upon inner experience; if the first is realistic, the second is romantic. "Blue Murder," "The Long Tryst," and "A Municipal Report" are romantic, however cleverly tied to reality they are and must be to achieve even momentary conviction. The actual setting of "The Long Tryst," for example, gives the illusion of reality to the fanciful tale; the interpolated statements of fact in "A Municipal Report" give reality to a figment of the romanticist.

Comment on the stories which seem to you the outgrowth of the author's experience in the outer life portrayed, on those which reveal his inner life. Is the realist or the romanticist a writer of greater imagination? How are Conrad's outer life and inner life revealed in "The Brute"?

Few stories spring full grown from the foreheads of their authors. The myth of Minerva but illustrates the exception to the processes of life development. A work of fiction, like life, begins with a germ. From character, or some phase of character, a setting or locale, a mood, or a situation—any one of which may be actual or imagined—may evolve a story.

Can you determine from these stories what, in each instance, inspired the author? What are some of the most interesting situations? Can you adduce parallels from your own observation or experience? Invent five or six situations suitable for development in a brief narrative and state whether you would wish to use them for humorous or serious tales, whether you would emphasize character, atmosphere, or plot. Reject all situations you could not handle with originality of structure and composition.

In constructing his story, the author must make a chain of events linked by cause and effect. In presenting events, however, he may reverse the order, at least in part. For example, "The Brute" begins with the end of the *Apse Family*, "that fellow Wilmot dashed her brains out," progresses by looking backward, and again moves forward. "Innocence" starts near the climax, gives the necessary details of back action, and rushes to its conclusion.

Observe plot order in these stories, noticing the use of direct progress and of inverted progress.

A plot has three stages; most present day plots have more. There must be (1) beginning of action, or initial impulse, after

which follow (2) steps leading to (3) the climax. "Buford" rests on an exceedingly simple plot: the stallion escapes, events follow directly to the meeting with Buford; the climax is victory for the bull. "The Most Dangerous Game" has five stages: Rainsford is convinced of General Zaroff's purpose; he escapes several times from the man-hunter, each escape assuming the proportions of a minor climax; he leaps into the ocean. If the story ended here, it would have been without reversal so far as story effect is concerned. But the author permits Rainsford to escape by swimming, to return to the house of his host, and to kill him in fair play. The leap into the ocean, therefore, marks the dramatic climax, after which follow the few events preceding the climax of action. "The Second Egg" makes use of the dramatic climax cause by its very title. Hoor's determination not to provide the second egg marks the turning point in his relations with the laborers; steps to the climax of action follow, this second climax presenting his downfall, after which yet comes the dénouement wherein his wife proves her loyalty. The dénouement, or final untying of the knot, may be included with the climax of action; but in this story it is distinct, adding a cap to the climax, and ending the action by a challenge to sympathy for Conrad.

Analyze all these stories for plot. Do you know stories by Stockton that omit the climax of action? What does Poe omit in "The Cask of Amontillado"? What plot details are omitted from "The Trawler"?

The composition of a story depends largely upon the point of view. After answering the question, "Whose story is this?" the author asks, "What is the best way to tell it?" He may set down the facts as if he were omniscient, familiar with both thoughts and acts of his characters; he may record acts only, as the camera records only the external. He may choose one of the characters and present the story (in either the first or the third person) as it unfolds before the eyes of that character. Having determined his method, he has determined his point of view. In general, the less he swerves from his chosen plan of attack, the better unified the story—unless he finds some other unifying principle. "A Day Off" is Abbie's story and is told for the greater part objectively, or dramatically, with the spotlight on Abbie; here and there, however, the author enters Abbie's

mind ("her heart softened," for example); the result is that the reader shifts easily from looking at Abbie to looking with her. "Innocence," which belongs not to Mary Alice but to her elders, is told perfectly from the point of view of Mary Alice; not once does the author forsake the child's mind as the medium through which the story facts are recorded. "The Most Dangerous Game" prefers Rainsford's point of view and the third person; it is also his story. "The Real Thing" chooses the artist's point of view and the first person. Whose story is it?

Consider the following with regard to point of view: "Peter Projects," "Zenobia's Infidelity," "The Trawler," "The Brute," "The Procurator of Judæa," "The Second Egg," "Two Friends," "Prelude," "The Little Girl from Town," "Buford." If the author shifts his point of view, does he gain anything?

A story may be told in straight narrative, as "I'm a Fool" is told throughout and as the greater part of "Buford" is told. Dialogue is used rarely for presenting the entire story. A combination of straight narrative and dialogue is economical, logical, and popular. The stories in this volume generally illustrate the combination, being unfolded through a series of scenes comparable to those of the stage, and connected by transitional matter indicating passing of time, change of setting, or summary of action. "A Day Off" and "Peter Projects" might be transferred, with few changes, to the stage. The scene should indicate setting clearly, should present the characters necessary to the action in that setting, and should carry on a part of the action the reader desires to see as far as possible without apparent intervention of the author.

What are the most dramatic scenes in these stories? In which of them does slang, "bad grammar," or dialect contribute to naturalness? In what scenes is action advanced by dialogue? In what scenes is character made vivid through dialogue? Mention good examples of local color in connection with setting or dialogue.

The long story or novel is best suited to development or disintegration of character; the short story, by its limits, is better adapted for character at a crisis. "I'm a Fool" presents a dramatic moment or crisis which possibly changes the course of the swipe's life. "The Trawler" relates the circumstances of Hugh

Glynn's sacrificial act—his final act. "The Second Egg" details the cataclysmic events connected with Conrad Hoor's nadir. Smaller crises are presented in "Little Gentleman," "Peter Projects," and "Good Old Uncle Homer."

What are they? What character crises are obvious in "A Day Off," "Never in This World," "White Bread," "The Cask of Amontillado," "Prelude," "Blue Murder"? In which of the stories is character dominated by a ruling passion? Which of the titles are best for indicating a ruling passion? Give reasons. In which stories are characteristic traits exaggerated for purposes of comedy?

Description of a character, his speech, and his acts should be integrated carefully by the brief short-story writer.

As examples of such unification, comment on Fortunato, Genevieve Gertrude, General Zaroff, Susan, the narrator of "I'm a Fool," Major Caswell, Major and Mrs. Monarch, Conrad Hoor, Eunice, Selina Jo, Patricia, Camden, Penrod. Prove by reference to Conrad's "The Brute" that of description, speech and action, one of the three is more important than the others. How should analysis of character be handled in the short story? If much analysis is employed, what is the effect on style, manner, and narrative gait or tempo?

Atmosphere, not infrequently confused with local color, is the "feel" of the story induced by the writer's mood, his purpose, his characters, setting, and plot. "The Cask of Amontillado," for example, reflects the narrator's mood of implacable revenge, a mood assumed by Poe as he wrote; the purpose of revenge is dominant throughout; the setting is largely in underground vaults marked by bones of dead men; the characters are enemies; the plot ends in entombment. All elements are massed in a definite feel of horror.

What is the atmosphere of "The Long Tryst"? "Good Old Uncle Homer"? "The Brute"? "Blue Murder"? "The Spiral Stone"?

About the composition of a story a few important essentials may be mentioned. The beginning should introduce character, indicate setting, strike the tone or convey the atmosphere, start the action, or do all these things. Curiosity must be aroused early and must not be permitted to flag, save for moments of

rest; rather should it increase with the progress of the action. Suspense should hold the reader until he has finished the last word. Clues are niceties of detail whereby the end is made to appear inevitable. All signs should point to the end; even if it is a purposed shock or surprise, the clues should be found on retrospect to point honestly to it, and the reader should feel that only his own interpretation of the omens or forecast was at fault. Striking coincidence should be employed sparingly in dramatic climax or climax of action; when the writer relies upon it he should prepare for its occurrence. A story may be based on coincidence easily enough; for example, "The Procurator of Judæa" rests on the chance meeting of two former friends. Had they not met, the inference is that the story would not have been told.

Which of these stories have the best beginnings? Give reasons. Recall the moments when you felt in greatest suspense. What are the reasons for suspense in "The Most Dangerous Game"? "Blue Murder"? "The Real Thing"? "Two Friends"? What unusual coincidence do you find in "A Tale of Negative Gravity"? Do you accept it and why? Is it a coincidence that Mr. Kinosling calls Penrod "little gentleman"? If so, is it acceptable? What are the clues to the end of "The Long Tryst"? "Never in This World"? "Peter Projects"? "The Trawler"? "A Municipal Report"? "Innocence"? "Blue Murder"?

Style is indicative of personality whether expressed through mood, tempo, sentence rhythm and structure, or diction. A style intellectually excellent, says Matthew Arnold, is marked by regularity, uniformity, precision, and balance. The style of the story writer needs, in particular, to be suggestive, forcible, simple, concrete, and picturesque. Besides these qualities, which make for emotional appeal, the æsthetic elements of grace, charm, and beauty also may be present.

Try to measure the personalities of the authors represented in this volume, by studying their respective styles. Whose stories best illustrate the æsthetic elements?

Bibliography

The student will find helpful the following critical works:

The Craft of Fiction, by Percy Lubbock (Scribner).
The Writing of Fiction, by Edith Wharton (Scribner).

The Craftsmanship of the One-Act Play, by Percival Wilde (Little, Brown).

A Handbook on Story Writing, by Blanche Colton Williams (Dodd, Mead).

The following collections are recommended:

O. Henry Memorial Prize Award Stories, Blanche Colton Williams, editor; annual volume, beginning 1919 (Doubleday, Doran).

Best Short Stories, Edward J. O'Brien, editor; annual volume, beginning 1915 (Dodd, Mead).

Best British Short Stories, Edward J. O'Brien, editor; annual volume (Dodd, Mead).

*Best Continental Short Stories, Best French Short Stories,** Richard Eaton, editor; annual volumes (Dodd, Mead).

Sweden's Best Stories, Hannah Astrup Larsen, editor (Norton).

Norway's Best Stories, Hannah Astrup Larsen, editor (Norton).

Selected Russian Short Stories, A. E. Chamot, editor (Oxford University Press).

Georgian Stories, annual volume (Putnam).

Stories from the Dial (Dial Press).

Thrice Told Tales, Blanche Colton Williams, editor (Dodd, Mead).

Twenty-Three Stories, by Twenty and Three Authors (Appleton).

Thirty-One Stories, by Thirty and One Authors, Ernest Rhys and C. A. Dawson-Scott, editors (Appleton).

The Great Modern American Stories, William Dean Howells, editor (Liveright).

The Short Story's Mutations, Frances Newman (Huebsch).

Contemporary Short Stories, Kenneth A. Robinson, editor (Houghton Mifflin).

Harper Prize Short Stories (Harper).

Short Stories, H. C. Schweikert, editor (Harcourt, Brace).

Selected English Stories, H. S. Milford, editor (Oxford University Press).

Great Short Stories of the World, Barrett H. Clark and Maxim Lieber, editors (McBride).

Great Stories of All Nations, Maxim Lieber and Blanche Colton Williams, editors (Brentano).

Century Readings in the American Short Story, Fred Lewis Pattee, editor (Century).

Cream of the Jug, Grant Overton, editor (Harper).

---

* Beginning 1929 these annuals are combined in one volume, entitled ***The Best European Short Stories.***

Fourteen Great Detective Stories, Vincent Starrett, editor (Modern Library).

American Detective Stories, American Mystery Stories, Carolyn Wells, editor (Oxford University Press).

Great Modern Detective Stories, Willard Huntington Wright, editor (Scribner).

The Fifteen Finest Short Stories, chosen by John Cournos (Dodd, Mead).

Great French Short Stories, Lewis Melville and Reginald Hargreaves, editors (Liveright).

SHORT STORIES FOR COLLEGE CLASSES

THE LONG TRYST[1]

A STORY OF OLD HAMILTON

By SAMUEL HOPKINS ADAMS

. . . and forever, in after years,
At the thought of its bloom or the fragrance of its breath
The past shall arise,
And his eyes shall be dim with tears,
And his soul shall be far in the gardens of Paradise.

—*Wishmakers Town.*

I

LAURIE'S coming was as strange as everything else about him.

The old college had gone to bed to the lullaby of a May wind. From the chapel tower, the habitant voice sent one golden note winging out into the darkness. The night was full of little whispers and faint fragrances.

A light glimmered, lonely, on the campus. It shone from the open window of Belden, who was working late on the final draft of his junior chapel oration. A vagrant breeze entered the room, breathed across his tired eyes, and twitched suggestively at the paper beneath his fingers.

"A good reminder," said Belden gravely, to the breeze. "I think, myself, it's time to quit."

He crossed to the window, and inhaled deeply of the sweet air. A voice came up to him from far below.

"Is that North-North-Second-Front-Middle?"

Belden did not recognize the voice, but he had a quaint, vague

[1] From *American Magazine*, July, 1911; copyright, 1911, by the Crowell Publishing Company. Reprinted by permission of the author.

feeling that its owner had been waiting to accost his room a long, long time—an hour perhaps, or a century.

"You've got your geography right," he responded, peering down. "And who are you?"

"Laurie. Laurie, '12."

"What are you giving me?" demanded Belden, puzzled. "There's no Laurie in '12."

"If there isn't, there will be to-morrow."

"The class will be honored," retorted Belden sardonically. "But why am I selected as special nocturnal repository for these glorious tidings?"

"Do you expect me to explain from here?" queried the voice plaintively.

Belden laughed. "Come up, then," he invited, his curiosity amused by the strange encounter. "Follow the railing to the second landing. There are no lights."

He heard the entry door swing, and presently the bidden guest's quick footsteps, mounting. Then the voice near by:

"Sixteen—seventeen—eighteen; and that's the top."

A slender, well-set figure appeared in the doorway, and stopped, giving Belden a moment's opportunity of appraisal. He got a quick physical impression of clean-cut, muscular competency, and a quick psychological impression of poise and power. The stranger looked to be not more than nineteen or twenty. His telling characteristic lay in the eyes, which were deep and bright, and looked out, with a singular and engaging frankness, from beneath a high forehead. Luxuriant, deep-brown hair curved and crested above—the hair of a faun vivifying the head of a dreamer.

"Well?" said Belden.

"Meaning 'What's your business here?'" translated the visitor. "I want to live here; here in North-North-Second-Front-Middle."

"Well, of all the fresh and verdant nerve!" burst out Belden, his upper-classman dignity ruffled.

"I know, it must seem so to you," agreed the other. "But perhaps when you under——"

"Will you have the infinite condescension to inform me when I'm to move out?" interrupted the other. "Have you seen Prexy's house yet? Maybe you'd like that better than my humble quarters."

Laurie's candid eyes never wavered. "I'm sorry if I've offended you," he said composedly. "I didn't expect you'd let me come

at once. But I thought perhaps later you'd take me in. I don't believe you'd find me a troublesome roommate. And most people like me," he added, with a childlike ingenuousness.

Belden laughed outright. "It doesn't seem impossible," he conceded. "Sit down. No harm in talking it over, anyway."

"Do you mind if I look about a little?" asked the visitor. He glanced at the inner apartment, where Belden's bed and dresser stood.

"Where's the other door?" he said in obvious surprise.

"What other door?" asked Belden quickly.

"Why I don't know. I thought—" the younger man rubbed his hand across his forehead, confusedly—"some way it seemed as if there ought to be two doors there. And there's only the one wide one."

It happened that Belden had once looked up some historical details of Hamilton College architecture. "This used to be a triple-room," he said; "but that was before the building was remodeled, in the fifties. You weren't here half a century ago, I suppose."

"I've never been on the campus until I took my exams to-day. Yet it all seems so familiar and natural to me——"

"Never been here before?" said Belden, looking at him keenly. "Then how came you to reckon the exact number of steps for the second flight, when you came up the stairs in the dark?"

The caller shook his head musingly. "I just felt, deep inside me, that there ought to be eighteen steps, just as I expected to find two narrow doors over there. And just as I feel that this room is home."

"So you've intimated already. Any particular reason for your delusion of locality?"

"The call of the blood, I suppose. Since my earliest memory I've always meant to come back to Hamilton."

"Back? Why, you just said you'd never been here before."

"But my great-grandfather has. Class of 1812, Hamilton Oneida Academy. He never graduated, though. Some trouble with the faculty; I don't know what. So I've returned to finish out his course."

"And where has your breed been since the year 1812?"

"Where not! Over the world and under the world," chanted the extraordinary visitor, "and back at the last to—Alma Great-Grand-Mater. *Cœlum non animam mutant*, you know."

" 'Constant the heart through all the changing climes,' " paraphrased Belden, with a smile. "Then you have 'run across the seas'?"

"Thousands of miles. Straight to this very spot."

Belden considered for a moment. "You mean me to understand that this is the room where Laurie of 1812 lived, in his academic days?"

"North-North-Second-Front-Middle. The same."

"Youngster, you win," pronounced Belden. "I can't go back on a tradition like that. No Hamilton man could. I'll take you in at the beginning of the fall term."

"I knew you would," returned the other contentedly.

"Meantime, if you care to turn in for the night, you'll find the couch all right."

"Thank you," said his guest. He threw off his coat and loosened his collar. "Oh, here's something that might interest you," he added, a trifle shyly. "It was my great-grandfather's." And he held out to Belden across the table a huge, old-fashioned cameo scarf-pin.

Advancing a step to take it, Belden stumbled. The pin fell to the table, and opened across its length.

"That's odd!" cried the boy; "I never knew there was a spring."

He touched it, and a slender lock of hair curled about his finger, like a living tendril. Underneath the hair a single white flower, exposed to the atmosphere, was already crumbling away. From it arose the subtly sweet odor of the white violet, perfuming the whole room.

"Strange," said Belden, "how powerful that is. And after all these years. But of course that must have been put there long after."

"No," replied Laurie positively. He closed the pin over the lock of hair. "My grandfather—the son of Laurie 1812, gave it to me: and he had never worn it. He told me so. Good night." He threw himself on the couch and was asleep directly.

It was dim dawn, when Belden was awakened by a stir and rustle of papers in the outer room. He leaped from his bed, and saw Laurie seat himself at the writing table, dip a pen in the ink, and draw to him a sheet of his (Belden's) unfinished manuscript.

"Here! Drop that!" cried the astonished host.

Laurie paid no heed. He bent over and his pen met the paper.

With a jump Belden was at his side—and drew back from the other's unseeing eyes. Very gently he laid a hand upon the writer's wrist. Laurie started up.

"What is it?" he said confusedly. "What have I been doing?"

"Walking in your sleep, I think," answered Belden.

Laurie did not seem to hear him. He stumbled back to the couch and lay quiet. For a time Belden stood watching him, then returned to his own bed.

The insistent clamor of the "first bell" called Belden back to consciousness. His guest was gone. Pinned to the couch pillow was a penciled note.

Thank you for taking me in. Forgive me for being such a troublesome guest. Au revoir! DONALD LAURIE.

With the paper in his hand, Belden turned to the desk. Slantwise across his essay manuscript ran a single broken line of writing.

Faith, dearest one. After all the weary ye——

Belden held the two writings up, side by side. He scanned them critically, looking from one to the other. They were utterly unlike.

II

By the end of the fall term, following, Donald Laurie had become something of a figure in college. Ripley Belden's fraternity, the "Arrowmen" (as they were called from the winged dart against the black background of their badge), opened to Belden's roommate. He was, in a quiet way, popular, and, even more, conspicuous. Frank and open-spirited as he was in all his relations there was, nevertheless, about him a certain air of reticence, of mystery, which piqued the interest of his eager-minded fellows. No man was more talked about, none less questioned; for Laurie maintained his own reserve, and college boys, rough though they be in formalities and externals, respect with a specific delicacy and restraint the intimate matters of their close-knit life. Only once was Laurie put directly to the question. That was when "Twink" Starr, the irrepressible member of the Arrowmen, scandalized the dinner table by blurting out:

"Who are you anyway, Don? And where the devil do you come from, and why? And how do you know more about Ham-Coll than all the rest of us put together?"

There was a wrathful murmur about the table. But Laurie replied with perfect good humor:

"Me? Oh, I'm a revenant. And I came from the farther edge of last century. Because—well, because the place drew me."

"And now, Mr. Inquisitive Sophomore," rebuked Belden, with the severity of the grave and reverend senior, "if you'd use your face more as a receptacle for food, and less as a lever to pry into other people's affairs, you'd set a better example to the freshmen."

Starr muttered an apology. But Belden noticed that the last detail of his composite question—Laurie's profound, intimate, and, as it were, instinctive knowledge, of the many and often subtle traditions of the old classical college—had received no answer. The thing had often puzzled Belden himself. To be sure, Laurie had a passion for old records and Hamiltoniana of all sorts. But that alone was insufficient to explain how a man who had been in college less than a year, and whose ties of association were of the remotest, could have become a recognized authority upon the unwritten laws which are so potent a factor in undergraduate life. More than this, and stranger, Laurie had become, as by some miracle, a sort of embodiment of that intangible but potent quality, Hamilton spirit; a spirit tested and refined by the stress of high rivalry with other and, most often, larger institutions; a spirit which, time and again by sheer loyalty of heart and unflinching resolution of temper, had won victory from many an all-but-lost field; which, whether in victory or defeat, stood for standards of honor as unyielding as its stern old standards of scholarship. If the college had been called upon to pick its typical "Hamilton man," it would have selected Donald Laurie.

And Belden, his nearest friend, would have agreed with the decision; but he would not have comprehended how it could be so. He did not pretend to understand Laurie.

"You can no more *know* Don," he once said, "than you can know a dog or a star. He thinks with a different mind."

Reticent by nature, Belden had implicitly respected his roommate's reticence. He had never even shown him the somnambulistic handwriting, memento of Laurie's first night in North-

North-Second-Front-Middle. Nor did the episode ever come to speech between them until one warm, still afternoon, late in April, nearly a year later. Laurie, now a junior, was working over material on early traditions, from which he proposed to make an article for the Lit. called "Campus Lore." Belden looked up from the baseball shoe he was lacing, and said:

"Don, did you dream of anything in particular last night?"

"I often have vivid dreams," Laurie said. "Why?"

"You walked in your sleep. Are you given that way?"

"Never did it before in my life, so far as I know."

"Then you don't know. You walked the night you first butted in here."

"You never told me."

"Didn't see any reason to. What's more, you wrote."

"Wrote? Where did I write?"

"On my manuscript. Here it is."

Laurie took the sheet of paper. "Hoot!" he said, at the first glance. "That isn't my handwriting."

"Yet I saw you write it, with my own eyes. And you wrote again last night."

"What?"

"I don't know. I didn't look to see. When I spoke to you, you pulled the paper away and went back to bed. What I want to know is, in case you do this nocturnal authorship stunt regularly, do you want to be stopped or shall I let you go on?"

Without replying, the junior shuffled among the loose papers on his desk. Presently he held one up.

"The same writing as the other," he said. "It can't be! Yet——" He passed his hand over his eyes, with a strange, half-desperate gesture. "Here's the name again; Faith."

"Don't let it get on your nerves, Don," advised Belden, soothingly. "Sleep-walkers always do queer stunts, I'm told."

"But—but Faith. That's what I can't fathom. Rip, do you ever have strange, almost unbearable struggles to recall something that keeps just beyond your reach? Just over the farther margin of memory."

"It afflicts me chiefly in Math," remarked Belden.

"Don't joke," returned Laurie with unaccustomed sharpness. "I may not ever speak to you of this again. But I've got to speak now, and free my mind of it. Rip, I don't know and I never have known any girl named Faith. Yet the name, as it

stands written there—why, the very sight and sound and perfume of it catch my breath in my throat. Can you understand that, Rip? I can't. And yet I ought. My heart stirs with it and knows; but not my mind."

"See here, Don," said Belden, after some hesitation, "you said a queer thing just now. You spoke of the perfume of the name. Do—do you use perfumery yourself? Last night, for example?"

"Of course not!"

"Yet, when I woke and found you sitting there, I would have sworn to the scent—Don," he said, breaking off suddenly. "Does the name 'Faith' suggest the scent of white violets to you."

"Yes," said the other. "How in Heaven's name did you know that?"

"The room was saturated with the odor of them last night. Oh, come, Don! This is getting fairly uncanny. Get on your togs and let's practice that run-in for a bunt with a man on second."

Laurie shook his head. "No; I'm going for a long walk to clear my brain," he said.

Long, solitary walks became his favorite occupation, as the days warmed toward summer. And after them, as if by direct sequence, came the accesses of somnambulism. Once Belden plucked his roommate from the window, from which he was perilously leaning; and again he drew him, not without the exercise of some force, from the back of the old wood closet, where he was prying feverishly at the paneling. But not until a mid-May night did Belden hear the voice of the spirit that haunted his friend's slumbers.

An overpast thunderstorm was growling, as it withdrew, like a beaten but incorrigible dog. The trees, in the aftercurrent of the wind, swayed gently. The earth exhaled soft odors. Above them, intoxicatingly sweet, Belden smelt the perfume of the wild white violets which Laurie had brought home that day from his lonely walk. Suddenly he became aware that Laurie was leaning over the flowers, murmuring. He saw his friend's figure cross to the window. Fearful of startling him into a plunge, Belden slipped quietly to the floor and advanced, when the figure at the window spoke.

"The light! The light! Oh, my dear, my dear! I've come back to you."

The voice struck Belden motionless for the moment. Instead

of the clear, high speech characteristic of Donald Laurie, the tones were deep, grave, and of a strange intonation.

"How long, how wearily long it's been, beloved," said the voice again, and Belden, for all his dismay, thrilled to the passion of it.

He set his hand upon Laurie's shoulder. With a quick, violent movement the other struck it aside.

"Do you stay me, sir?" cried the voice. Then with an abrupt change to Donald Laurie's crisp accent:

"What is it, Rip? What's the matter?"

"You've been dreaming again."

"Dreaming?" Laurie lifted a pallid face. "Oh, Rip, why did you wake me!"

The bitterness of that cry Belden carried into his own dreams. In the morning Laurie made no reference to the event. But he begged off from baseball practice that afternoon, and when he came in, it was with a handful of fresh white violets.

"Where do you get those, Don?" asked Belden.

"Aren't they wonders!" replied the other, evading the question. "And listen: isn't this a wonder, too?"

He dropped his voice a little, and quoted:

"For the orange flower
Ye may buy as ye will; but the violet of the wood
Is the love of maidenhood;
And he that hath worn it but once, though but for an hour,
He shall never again, though he wander by many a stream,
No, never again shall he meet with a flower that shall seem
So sweet and pure; and forever, in after years,
At the thought of its bloom or the fragrance of its breath,
The past shall arise,
And his eyes shall be dim with tears,
And his soul shall be far in the gardens of Paradise,
Though he stand in the shambles of death."

"Say, that *is* something, isn't it!" commented Belden, impressed. "Where did you dig it up?"

"From a forgotten book of poems, 'Wishmakers Town.' I was delving in the library among a lot of miscellany for material on my 'Campus Lore' stunt. By the way, Rip, did you know we used to be co-ed?"

"Get out! Not Ham-Coll."

"Well; Hamilton Oneida Academy. I found a mention of it

here." He held up a spineless and flabby volume. "Oh; and here's something I didn't see before. Roster of our early fellow-alumnæ. Listen: Alice Denning, Prudence Miller, Mary Esther Ripley (one of your lot, Rip?), Elizabeth Brent, Faith Woolsey." He laid the pamphlet down. "Faith," he repeated softly.

"Pass it up, Don," said the senior, with some uneasiness. "It's getting on my nerves. So are your 'violets of the wood.' "

"All right," acquiesced Laurie, with his customary amiability. "If they worry you, I won't bring any more home."

So profoundly did they worry the usually phlegmatic Belden that he rose that night after his crony was asleep, and tossed the blooms out of the window. Then his heart came into his throat, for, as they fell, to scatter whitely upon the red shale walk below, Laurie stirred and moaned.

If he missed the violets he made no comment in the morning. Comment came, however, in startling form, at breakfast, from Twink Starr, the irrepressible.

"Who was the midnight Molly you were showing the campus to last night, Don?"

"Last night? What's the matter with your brain, Twink?"

"Nothing. Nor with my eyesight. Tak' thought to yersel, mannie. I was on my way to Carnegie, after a one o'clock session at the Psi Chi house, when muh startled eyes beheld you and the fair one Payson-Westoning in front of North."

"What a curse is rum!" observed Laurie, judiciously.

"One sarsaparilla," declared the sophomore. "Wouldn't I know that strut of yours, through a barrel of rum? Oh, Donnie! Donnie-Juannie Laurie!" Starr broke into song:

> Like the dew on the snowdrop lying
> Was the fall of your fairy feet.

And, by the way, she had a big bunch of snowdrops or something, in the front of her dress."

"What's that?" said a voice from behind, sharply. Belden had come into the room in time to hear the last speech.

"Nothing to jump me for," replied the sophomore. "Just scurfing Don a little on his flirty ways."

"But, Twink," said Laurie earnestly. "There's some mistake. I wasn't on the campus last night, either with or without a girl." Speaking, he touched, with an almost imperceptible gesture, the

arrow badge on his breast. Starr's mischievous face changed instantly. "All right, old man," he said. "I was wrong, of course."

"And see that you remember it, Twink," added Belden, in a low tone. "Don was in bed and asleep before midnight, last night."

"Well, I must have 'em," said Starr. "No more of the soul-destroying sarsaparilla for me. Beer, from now on."

Less than a week later the "Kaiser" climbed the stairs to North-North-Second-Front-Middle. Officially, the "Kaiser" is Professor Max Marsh, head of the modern language department. In his thirty years' service, the quiet, cheery German has learned something of the inner nature of the undergraduate; and his relation to the "boys" is that rare relation of mutual respect, confidence and fellowship which exists between authority and the subject only in the small college. The "Kaiser" found Belden alone. Laurie was at the Lit. Board's afternoon council.

"Hello, Ripley," said the "Kaiser," seating himself on the senior's lounge.

"Hello, Professor!" greeted the other heartily. "Glad to see you. When can I tackle you for another round of golf?"

"When you learn not to take *more* than three puts on the home green," twinkled the "Kaiser," referring to a painful episode of the recent Union-Hamilton match. "But I came to talk to you about Laurie."

"What about Laurie?" queried the senior uneasily.

"He's been on the campus late at night with a girl."

"Some one's been lying," growled Belden.

"I've seen them myself."

"I beg pardon, Kai—Professor." Professor Marsh smiled. "Do you know who the girl was, sir?"

"No. A stranger to me. Whoever she is, Laurie should consider her—should consider her reputation. Mind," continued the kindly scholar, "I am not implying anything wrong. Laurie is thoughtless, but he is clean and honorable. And the girl's face was as pure as the violets she wears at her breast."

"When did you see Laurie and the girl, Professor?" asked Belden in a voice that made the other look at him keenly.

"Twice. I've been amusing myself of nights, searching for the comet, from the observatory. The first time was—let me see—last Friday night; Saturday morning rather, about two o'clock. I saw them again last night, shortly after midnight."

"Professor, what would you say if I said it was impossible?"

"I should ask your proof."

"For Friday night I can't answer positively. But last night I worked here until two o'clock. Laurie was asleep at eleven. He never stirred from his bed in that time."

"You are certain?"

"On my honor, sir."

The "Kaiser" rose. There was the relaxation of unmistakable relief on his face. "I did not like to think of the boy as being so careless of a woman's good name," he said. "Ah, well! Aging eyes! Aging eyes! We'd best hurry that golf match before I go wholly blind. Good night, Ripley."

Hardly had he left when Laurie came in.

"What does the 'Kaiser' mean about my 'doppelganger'?" he asked curiously. "I just met him on the stairs, and he intimated that somebody had been taking my personal appearance in vain."

"Oh, a mistake of his about seeing you on the campus," returned the other evasively. "Going to the whist club to-night, Don?"

"No. I'm on noon chapel to-morrow, you know. I want to run over my spiel until I'm certain of it."

But when Belden returned the junior was not at work on his oration. He was poring over a number of old volumes of records which he had exhumed from some obscure nook of the library.

"Cut that," the senior advised curtly. "You waste too much time on that 'Campus Lore' stunt of yours."

"It's more than that," replied Laurie, looking up with dreamy eyes. "There's something in those musty pages that is calling—calling like a human voice, to me. You remember what I said about the striving to remember. Well, Rip," he swept his hand above the heaped-up prints, "I'm peering dimly across that farther margin of memory—just a little. Perhaps—perhaps," he added as if to himself, "I shall step over."

"Quit it," ordered the other, "you make me creep!" Then, curiously: "Aren't you at all—afraid, Don?"

"Afraid!" cried Laurie, with a deep thrill in his voice. "I've never known what gladness was until I've had this glimpse." He lifted his face, murmuring:

> "And his soul shall be far in the gardens of Paradise,
> Though he stand in the shambles of death."

Belden undressed slowly and thoughtfully. Slowly he fell asleep, with the light of his roommate's research shining from the outer room across his eyes. The light was still burning when he awoke—awoke with the moist, fresh odor of white violets creeping into his brain. Laurie's bed was undisturbed. The outer room was empty. He ran to the window. Far above him a slow-surging current of wind moved, making deep music like the groundswell of a mightier ocean. The night was not black; it was gray, deep, fathomless gray. He leaned out into it, calling:

"Don! Oh, Don!"

A dim echo mocked his terror. There was no other reply. But it seemed to him that from the depths of the night a wistful and wonderful soul was striving to make answer; to tell him some unthinkable and lovely and awful mystery. The voice in the chapel spire spoke once, twice, thrice, and from the far-away, slumber-wrapped village another bell answered, confirming the measured message of Time.

Belden drew back from Infinity to the narrow limits of the room. Something compelled him to his friend's desk. A yellowed pamphlet lay open there. The page heading stood out, grim and ugly. "Report on a Case of Discipline Affecting the Morals of the Academy; in the year 1812." Belden read:

The decree of the instructor is filed and approved, that for the breaking of rules, in that the said Faith Woolsey, of the township of Vernon, N. Y., being a student of this Academy in regular standing, consorted at unseemly hours upon the academic grounds with a male student, shall be expelled with every circumstance of public disgrace; and that the said Donald Laurie——

The words blurred before Belden's eyes. And the moments blurred in his brain, until he found himself pounding at the doors of his fraternity house, across the campus, to rouse the Arrowmen to the search for Laurie, '12; Laurie who had gone into the night on his own search.

A stir went through Wednesday noon chapel when Laurie failed to answer to his name. Oratory, like classicism, is the cherished tradition of the old college on the hill, and to "cut noon chapel" is heretical. In particular, as Laurie had been a sure candidate for prize-speaking appointment, wonder buzzed wordlessly across the seats. On the campus it swelled and spread. Then Belden

spoke out, and the college scattered to the hunt for the missing man.

All day Belden tramped, with an inexplicable drawing at his heart toward his own room. Something insistently told him that there lay the clue. At dusk, he obeyed the summons. As he entered the room, the scent of violets, very faint, but insistent, thrilled his nerves. It led him, inert and unresisting, to the old wood closet, where once the sleep-walker had plucked at the panels. Blindly obedient to the impulse within, he beat and tore at the woodwork until it fell, disclosing an inner space and an old shelf. From this he took a brass-bound writing desk of dark rosewood. Unerringly he felt for the spring and released a shallow, secret drawer. From within rose a thin powder, making him dizzy and faint with the aroma of violets long, long dead. He staggered to the window with the letter in his hand. The ink was faded but still legible; the handwriting tall and quaint and girlish.

Donald, my Beloved: Come back to me. The disgrace is hard to bear, but you know, and I know, my innocence. It is the longing for you that is breaking my heart. I trust you with all my soul. I know you will return to me though it were an hundred years. But come soon. The white violets that you loved are in bloom again. You know where. Come soon or you may be too late to find Your FAITH.

Across it was endorsed heavily, "Too late, indeed! May 26, 1813." The writing of the despairing endorsement was, line for line and slant for slant, that which Donald Laurie in the year of wonders 1911 had left, with his sleep-guided hand, upon Belden's manuscript.

From a numb wonder, Belden's mind sharply reverted to acute activity. The violets had led him thus far; they would take him to the end of the trail. He ran to the room of Starr.

"Twink," he said, "you're the naturalist of the crowd. Where do wild white violets grow around here?"

The sophomore considered. "Only in one place that I know," he said. "And that's three miles away, up toward Vernon Centre. There are the ruins of an old stone homestead there."

"Take me to it," ordered Belden.

The two men loped through the gathering gloom up the long hill. Starr slackened, and cut diagonally across a patch of wood-

land, coming out upon an all but obliterated road. It rose to a sharp knoll, crowned with oaks. A ruinous chimney reared and bristled among the leaves.

"They must have planted the violets long, long ago," panted Starr as they toiled up the ascent. "They've spread all over the place."

Indeed, the brow of the knoll was carpeted with the fragrant whiteness. It was thickest in one far corner, half encircled by shrubbery. Belden led the way thither. Beneath the shrubbery was a mound, whitened like snow with the blooms. Laurie lay with one arm thrown across it, his smiling face pillowed on the other.

Belden bent to touch the cold forehead; then straightened up, silently, to part the leaves of a rose bush which screened a toppling headstone. On the stained, chipped marble was inscribed:

Sacred to the Memory of Faith Woolsey.
Born Jan. 7, 1796. Died June 30, 1812.

The leaves slipped back as Belden withdrew his hand. He gathered a handful of violets and let them fall upon the dead, happy face. A sob from Starr made him turn.

"He—he's gone, isn't he?" said the sophomore brokenly.

Belden put an arm on the boy's heaving shoulders. "I don't know, Twink," he said very gently, "I think he's come back."

I'M A FOOL[1]

By SHERWOOD ANDERSON

IT was a hard jolt for me, one of the most bitterest I ever had to face. And it all came about through my own foolishness too. Even yet, sometimes, I want to cry or swear or kick myself. Perhaps, even now, after all this time, there will be a kind of satisfaction in making myself look cheap by telling of it.

It began at three o'clock one October afternoon as I sat in the grandstand at the fall trotting and pacing meet at Sandusky, Ohio.

To tell the truth, I felt a little foolish that I should be sitting in the grandstand at all. During the summer before I had left my home town with Harry Whitehead and, with a nigger named Burt, had taken a job as swipe with one of the two horses Harry was campaigning through the fall race meets that year. Mother cried and my sister Mildred, who wanted to get a job as school teacher in our town that fall, stormed and scolded about the house all during the week before I left. They both thought it something disgraceful that one of our family should take a place as a swipe with race horses. I've an idea Mildred thought my taking the place would stand in the way of her getting the job she'd been working so long for.

But after all I had to work and there was no other work to be got. A big lumbering fellow of nineteen couldn't just hang around the house and I had got too big to mow people's lawns and sell newspapers. Little chaps who could get next to people's sympathies by their sizes were always getting jobs away from me. There was one fellow who kept saying to everyone who wanted a lawn mowed or a cistern cleaned that he was saving money to work his way through college, and I used to lie awake nights thinking up ways to injure him without being found out. I kept thinking of wagons running over him and bricks falling on his head as he walked along the street. But never mind him.

I got the place with Harry and I liked Burt fine. We got

[1] From *The Dial,* February, 1922; copyright, 1922, by The Dial Corporation. Reprinted by permission of the author.

along splendid together. He was a big nigger with a lazy sprawling body and soft kind eyes, and when it came to a fight he could hit like Jack Johnson. He had Bucephalus, a big black pacing stallion that could do 2.09 or 2.10 if he had to, and I had a little gelding named Doctor Fritz that never lost a race all fall when Harry wanted him to win.

We set out from home late in July in a box car with the two horses, and after that, until late November, we kept moving along to the race meets and the fairs. It was a peachy time for me, I'll say that. Sometimes, now, I think that boys who are raised regular in houses, and never have a fine nigger like Burt for best friend, and go to high schools and college, and never steal anything or get drunk a little, or learn to swear from fellows who know how, or come walking up in front of a grandstand in their shirt sleeves and with dirty horsey pants on when the races are going on and the grandstand is full of people all dressed up—What's the use talking about it? Such fellows don't know nothing at all. They've never had no opportunity.

But I did. Burt taught me how to rub down a horse and put the bandages on after a race and steam a horse out and a lot of valuable things for any man to know. He could wrap a bandage on a horse's leg so smooth that if it had been the same color you would think it was his skin, and I guess he'd have been a big driver, too, and got to the top like Murphy and Walter Cox and the others if he hadn't been black.

Gee whizz, it was fun. You got to a county seat town maybe, say, on a Saturday or Sunday, and the fair began the next Tuesday and lasted until Friday afternoon. Doctor Fritz would be, say, in the 2.25 trot on Tuesday afternoon and on Thursday afternoon Bucephalus would knock 'em cold in the "free-for-all" pace. It left you a lot of time to hang around and listen to horse talk, and see Burt knock some yap cold that got too gay, and you'd find out about horses and men and pick up a lot of stuff you could use all the rest of your life if you had some sense and salted down what you heard and felt and saw.

And then at the end of the week when the race meet was over, and Harry had run home to tend up to his livery stable business, you and Burt hitched the two horses to carts and drove slow and steady across country to the place for the next meeting so as not to overheat the horses, etc., etc., you know.

Gee whizz, gosh amighty, the nice hickorynut and beechnut

and oaks and other kinds of trees along the roads, all brown and red, and the good smells, and Burt singing a song that was called Deep River, and the country girls at the windows of houses and everything. You can stick your colleges up your nose for all me. I guess I know where I got my education.

Why, one of those little burgs of towns you come to on the way, say now, on a Saturday afternoon, and Burt says, "let's lay up here." And you did.

And you took the horses to a livery stable and fed them and you got your good clothes out of a box and put them on.

And the town was full of farmers gaping, because they could see you were race horse people, and the kids maybe never see a nigger before and was afraid and run away when the two of us walked down their main street.

And that was before prohibition and all that foolishness, and so you went into a saloon, the two of you, and all the yaps come and stood around, and there was always someone pretended he was horsey and knew things and spoke up and began asking questions, and all you did was to lie and lie all you could about what horses you had, and I said I owned them, and then some fellow said, "Will you have a drink of whiskey?" and Burt knocked his eye out the way he could say, offhand like, "Oh, well, all, all right, I'm agreeable to a little nip. I'll split a quart with you." Gee whizz.

But that isn't what I want to tell my story about. We got home late in November and I promised mother I'd quit the race horses for good. There's a lot of things you've got to promise a mother because she don't know any better.

And so, there not being any work in our town any more than when I left there to go to the races, I went off to Sandusky and got a pretty good place taking care of the horses for a man who owned a teaming and delivery and storage business there. It was a pretty good place with good eats and a day off each week and sleeping on a cot in the big barn, and mostly just shoveling in hay and oats to a lot of big good-enough skates of horses that couldn't have trotted a race with a toad. I wasn't dissatisfied and I could send money home.

And then, as I started to tell you, the fall races come to Sandusky and I got the day off and I went. I left the job at noon and had on my good clothes and my new brown derby hat I'd just bought the Saturday before, and a stand-up collar.

First of all I went downtown and walked about with the dudes. I've always thought to myself, "put up a good front," and so I did it. I had forty dollars in my pocket and so I went into the West House, a big hotel, and walked up to the cigar stand. "Give me three twenty-five cent cigars," I said. There was a lot of horse men and strangers and dressed-up people from other towns standing around in the lobby and in the bar, and I mingled amongst them. In the bar there was a fellow with a cane and a Windsor tie on, that it made me sick to look at him. I like a man to be a man and dress up, but not to go put on that kind of airs. So I pushed him aside, kind of rough, and had me a drink of whiskey. And then he looked at me as though he thought he'd get gay, but he changed his mind and didn't say anything. And then I had another drink of whiskey, just to show him something, and went out and had a hack out to the races all to myself, and when I got there I bought myself the best seat I could get up in the grandstand, but didn't go in for any of these boxes. That's putting on too many airs.

And so there I was, sitting up in the grandstand as gay as you please and looking down on the swipes coming out with their horses and with their dirty horsey pants on and the horse blankets swung over their shoulders same as I had been doing all the year before. I liked one thing about the same as the other, sitting up there and feeling grand and being down there and looking up at the yaps and feeling grander and more important too. One thing's about as good as another if you take it just right. I've often said that.

Well, right in front of me, in the grandstand that day, there was a fellow with a couple of girls and they was about my age. The young fellow was a nice guy all right. He was the kind maybe that goes to college and then comes to be a lawyer or maybe a newspaper editor or something like that, but he wasn't stuck on himself. There are some of that kind are all right and he was one of the ones.

He had his sister with him and another girl and the sister looked around over his shoulder, accidental at first, not intending to start anything—she wasn't that kind—and her eyes and mine happened to meet.

You know how it is. Gee, she was a peach. She had on a soft dress, kind of a blue stuff, and it looked carelessly made, but was well sewed and made and everything. I knew that much.

I blushed when she looked right at me and so did she. She was the nicest girl I've ever seen in my life. She wasn't stuck on herself and she could talk proper grammar without being like a school teacher or something like that. What I mean is, she was O.K. I think maybe her father was well-to-do, but not rich to make her chesty because she was his daughter, as some are. Maybe he owned a drug store or a dry goods store in their home town, or something like that. She never told me and I never asked.

My own people are all O.K. too, when you come to that. My grandfather was Welsh and over in the old country, in Wales, he was—but never mind that.

The first heat of the first race come off and the young fellow setting there with the two girls left them and went down to make a bet. I knew what he was up to, but he didn't talk big and noisy and let everyone around know he was a sport, as some do. He wasn't that kind. Well, he come back and I heard him tell the two girls what horse he'd bet on, and when the heat was trotted they all half got to their feet and acted in the excited, sweaty way people do when they've got money down on a race, and the horse they bet on is up there pretty close at the end, and they think maybe he'll come on with a rush, but he never does because he hasn't got the old juice in him, come right down to it.

And, then, pretty soon, the horses came out for the 2.18 pace and there was a horse in it I knew. He was a horse Bob French had in his string, but Bob didn't own him. He was a horse owned by a Mr. Mathers down at Marietta, Ohio.

This Mr. Mathers had a lot of money and owned a coal mine or something, and he had a swell place out in the country, and he was stuck on race horses, but was a Presbyterian or something, and I think more than likely his wife was one, too, maybe a stiffer one than himself. So he never raced his horses hisself, and the story round the Ohio race tracks was that when one of his horses got ready to go to the races he turned him over to Bob French and pretended to his wife he was sold.

So Bob had the horses and he did pretty much as he pleased and you can't blame Bob; at least, I never did. Sometimes he was out to win and sometimes he wasn't. I never cared much about that when I was swiping a horse. What I did want to know

was that my horse had the speed and could go out in front if you wanted him to.

And, as I'm telling you, there was Bob in this race with one of Mr. Mathers' horses, was named "About Ben Ahem" or something like that, and was fast as a streak. He was a gelding and had a mark of 2.21, but could step in .08 or .09.

Because when Burt and I were out, as I've told you, the year before, there was a nigger Burt knew, worked for Mr. Mathers, and we went out there one day when we didn't have no race on at the Marietta Fair and our boss Harry had gone home.

And so everyone was gone to the fair but just this one nigger, and he took us all through Mr. Mathers' swell house and he and Burt tapped a bottle of wine Mr. Mathers had hid in his bedroom, back in a closet, without his wife knowing, and he showed us this Ahem horse. Burt was always stuck on being a driver, but didn't have much chance to get to the top, being a nigger, and he and the other nigger gulped that whole bottle of wine and Burt got a little lit up.

So the nigger let Burt take this About Ben Ahem and step him a mile in a track Mr. Mathers had all to himself, right there on the farm. And Mr. Mathers had one child, a daughter, kinda sick and not very good looking, and she came home and we had to hustle and get About Ben Ahem stuck back in the barn.

I'm only telling you to get everything straight. At Sandusky, that afternoon I was at the fair, this young fellow with the two girls was fussed, being with the girls and losing his bet. You know how a fellow is that way. One of them was his girl and the other his sister. I had figured that out.

"Gee whizz," I says to myself, "I'm going to give him the dope."

He was mighty nice when I touched him on the shoulder. He and the girls were nice to me right from the start and clear to the end. I'm not blaming them.

And so he leaned back and I gave him the dope on About Ben Ahem. "Don't bet a cent on this first heat because he'll go like an oxen hitched to a plough, but when the first heat is over go right down and lay on your pile." That's what I told him.

Well, I never saw a fellow treat any one sweller. There was a fat man sitting beside the little girl that had looked at me twice by this time, and I at her, and both blushing, and what did he

do but have the nerve to turn and ask the fat man to get up and change places with me so I could set with his crowd.

Gee whizz, amighty. There I was. What a chump I was to go and get gay up there in the West House bar, and just because that dude was standing there with a cane and that kind of a necktie on, to go and get all balled up and drink that whiskey, just to show off.

Of course, she would know, me setting right beside her and letting her smell of my breath. I could have kicked myself right down out of that grandstand and all around that race track and made a faster record than most of the skates of horses they had there that year.

Because that girl wasn't any mutt of a girl. What wouldn't I have given right then for a stick of chewing gum to chew, or a lozenger, or some licorice, or most anything. I was glad I had those twenty-five cent cigars in my pocket, and right away I give that fellow one and lit one myself. Then that fat man got up and we changed places and there I was plunked down beside her.

They introduced themselves, and the fellow's best girl he had with him, was named Miss Elinor Woodbury, and her father was a manufacturer of barrels from a place called Tiffin, Ohio. And the fellow himself was named Wilbur Wessen and his sister was Miss Lucy Wessen.

I suppose it was their having such swell names got me off my trolley. A fellow, just because he has been a swipe with a race horse, and works taking care of horses for a man in the teaming, delivery and storage business, isn't any better or worse than anyone else. I've often thought that, and said it, too.

But you know how a fellow is. There's something in that kind of nice clothes, and the kind of nice eyes she had, and the way she looked at me, awhile before, over her brother's shoulder, and me looking back at her, and both of us blushing.

I couldn't show her up for a boob, could I?

I made a fool of myself, that's what I did. I said my name was Walter Mathers from Marietta, Ohio, and then I told all three of them the smashingest lie you ever heard. What I said was that my father owned the horse About Ben Ahem, and that he had let him out to this Bob French for racing purposes, because our family was proud and had never gone into racing that way, in our own name, I mean. Then I had got started, and they were

all leaning over and listening, and Miss Lucy Wessen's eyes were shining, and I went the whole hog.

I told about our place down at Marietta, and about the big stables and the grand brick house we had on a hill, up above the Ohio River, but I knew enough not to do it in no bragging way. What I did was to start things and then let them drag the rest out of me. I acted just as reluctant to tell as I could. Our family hasn't got any barrel factory, and, since I've known us, we've always been pretty poor, but not asking anything of anyone at that, and my grandfather, over in Wales—but never mind that.

We set there talking like we had known each other for years and years, and I went and told them that my father had been expecting maybe this Bob French wasn't on the square, and had sent me up to Sandusky on the sly to find out what I could.

And I bluffed it through I had found out all about the 2.18 pace in which About Ben Ahem was to start.

I said he would lose the first heat by pacing like a lame cow and then he would come back and skin 'em alive after that. And to back up what I said I took thirty dollars out of my pocket and handed it to Mr. Wilbur Wessen and asked him would he mind, after the first heat, to go down and place it on About Ben Ahem for whatever odds he could get. What I said was that I didn't want Bob French to see me and none of the swipes.

Sure enough the first heat come off and About Ben Ahem went off his stride, up the back stretch, and looked like a wooden horse or a sick one, and come in to be last. Then this Wilbur Wessen went down to the betting place under the grandstand and there I was with the two girls, and when that Miss Woodbury was looking the other way once, Lucy Wessen kinda, with her shoulder you know, kinda touched me. You know how a woman can do. They get close, but not getting gay either. You know what they do. Gee whizz.

And then they give me a jolt. What they had done when I didn't know, was to get together, and they had decided Wilbur Wessen would bet fifty dollars, and the two girls had gone and put in ten dollars each of their own money, too. I was sick then, but I was sicker later.

About the gelding, About Ben Ahem, and their winning their money I wasn't worried a lot about that. It come out O.K.

Ahem stepped the next three heats like a bushel of spoiled eggs going to market before they could be found out, and Wilbur Wessen had got nine to two for the money. There was something else eating at me.

Because Wilbur come back after he had bet the money, and after that he spent most of his time talking to that Miss Woodbury, and Lucy Wessen and I was left alone together like on a desert island. Gee, if I'd only been on the square or if there had been any way of getting myself on the square. There ain't any Walter Mathers, like I said to her and them, and there hasn't ever been one, but if there was, I bet I'd go to Marietta, Ohio, and shoot him to-morrow.

There I was, big boob that I am. Pretty soon the race was over, and Wilbur had gone down and collected our money, and we had a hack downtown, and he stood us a swell dinner at the West House, and a bottle of champagne beside.

And I was with that girl and she wasn't saying much, and I wasn't saying much either. One thing I know. She wasn't stuck on me because of the lie about my father being rich and all that. There's a way you know. . . . Craps amighty. There's a kind of girl you see just once in your life, and if you don't get busy and make hay then you're gone for good and all and might as well go jump off a bridge. They give you a look from inside of them somewhere, and it ain't no vamping, and what it means is—you want that girl to be your wife, and you want nice things around her like flowers and swell clothes, and you want her to have the kids you're going to have, and you want good music played and no ragtime. Gee whizz.

There's a place over near Sandusky, across a kind of bay, and it's called Cedar Point. And when we had had that dinner we went over to it in a launch, all by ourselves. Wilbur and Miss Lucy and that Miss Woodbury had to catch a ten o'clock train back to Tiffin, Ohio, because when you're out with girls like that you can't get careless and miss any trains and stay out all night like you can with some kinds of Janes.

And Wilbur blowed himself to the launch and it cost him fifteen cold plunks, but I wouldn't ever have knew it if I hadn't listened. He wasn't no tin horn kind of a sport.

Over at the Cedar Point place we didn't stay around where there was a gang of common kind of cattle at all.

There was big dance halls and dining places for yaps, and there

was a beach you could walk along and get where it was dark, and we went there.

She didn't talk hardly at all and neither did I, and I was thinking how glad I was my mother was all right, and always made us kids learn to eat with a fork at table and not swill soup and not be noisy and rough like a gang you see around a race track that way.

Then Wilbur and his girl went away up the beach and Lucy and I set down in a dark place where there was some roots of old trees the water had washed up, and after that, the time, till we had to go back in the launch and they had to catch their trains, wasn't nothing at all. It went like winking your eye.

Here's how it was. The place we were setting in was dark, like I said, and there was the roots from that old stump sticking up like arms, and there was a watery smell, and the night was like—as if you could put your hand out and feel it—so warm and soft and dark and sweet like an orange.

I most cried and I most swore and I most jumped up and danced, I was so mad and happy and sad.

When Wilbur come back from being alone with his girl, and she saw him coming, Lucy she says, "We got to go to the train now," and she was most crying, too, but she never knew nothing I knew, and she couldn't be so all busted up. And then, before Wilbur and Miss Woodbury got up to where she was, she put her face up and kissed me quick and put her head up against me and she was all quivering and— Gee whizz.

Sometimes I hope I have cancer and die. I guess you know what I mean. We went in the launch across the bay to the train like that, and it was dark too. She whispered and said it was like she and I could get out of the boat and walk on the water, and it sounded foolish, but I knew what she meant.

And then quick, we were right at the depot, and there was a big gang of yaps, the kind that goes to the fairs, and crowded and milling around like cattle, and how could I tell her? "It won't be long because you'll write and I'll write to you." That's all she said.

I got a chance like a hay barn afire. A swell chance I got.

And maybe she would write me, down at Marietta that way, and the letter would come back, and stamped on the front of it by the U.S.A. "there ain't any such guy," or something like that, whatever they stamp on a letter that way.

And me trying to pass myself off for a bigbug and a swell—to her, as decent a little body as God ever made. Craps amighty. A swell chance I got.

And then the train come in and she got on, and Wilbur Wessen come and shook hands with me, and that Miss Woodbury was nice too, and bowed to me and I at her and the train went and I busted out and cried like a kid.

Gee, I could have run after that train and made Dan Patch look like a freight train after a wreck, but socks amighty, what was the use? Did you ever see such a fool?

I'll bet you what—if I had an arm broke right now or a train had run over my foot—I wouldn't go to no doctor at all. I'd go set down and let her hurt and hurt—that's what I'd do.

I'll bet you what—if I hadn't a drunk that booze I'd a never been such a boob as to go tell such a lie—that couldn't never be made straight to a lady like her.

I wish I had that fellow right here that had on a Windsor tie and carried a cane. I'd smash him for fair. Gosh darn his eyes. He's a big fool—that's what he is.

And if I'm not another you just go find me one and I'll quit working and be a bum and give him my job. I don't care nothing for working and earning money and saving it for no such boob as myself.

NEVER IN THIS WORLD[1]

By STEPHEN MOREHOUSE AVERY

WOVEN into the high green background of Connecticut meadows, a bright strand of road mounted between low gray walls of piled field stones. Sections of the wall were blanketed with climbing roses, and an offshore breeze, braced with salt, bore also a moist fragrance of the earth itself, for it was that time of year and it was morning. Farther on up the rise a very tiny girl, perched atop the wall, made a bluer spot against the blue sky, and a black spot, zigzagging aimlessly in the road as he climbed toward her, was a very small, venturing boy.

The tiny girl watched his approach with her head cocked alertly, her flying hair swarming with sunbeams, a tuneless, speculative child's hum on her lips, until finally he stopped in the road opposite and stared at her with an unabashed, brown-eyed fixity which meant that she was something to be examined, judged and rated against other strange discoveries.

As for him, he was not strange. He was just a sturdy little lad in improvised pants, scuffed shoes and a cap which was yanked so askew over his eyes that he had to tilt back his head to see her. Presently an impulse of male initiative emerged from his uncertainty. With a thrust of his chunky arms deep into his pants pockets, he said, "Want to race?"

That was by way of testing her reality. Little girls, according to his standard, never had front teeth, always wore rubber bands around their bobtails of straight hair, and spent their whole lives teasing, tattling, bawling and asking for your candy—if you had any. But this one was more like the picture on the cover of Tommy Wilcox's bedtime story book, and her first remark made him wonder if she weren't lost out of there. "Paul doesn't allow me to race," she said, "not since I fell asleep chasing Mr. Red Top. That's the clover fairy."

The small boy thought it all over and then with subtle relevancy said, "I'm seven."

---

[1] From *Collier's*, May 19, 1928; copyright, 1928, by P. F. Collier & Son. Reprinted by permission of the author.

But she only smiled happily and turned her blue-eyed, shell-clear bit of a face to the breeze so that her glinting hair blew. "Soon I'll be grown up, too. I'm as good as five. What's your name?"

He scowled but told her: "It's Benny."

"Benny what?"

"Benny Trout. What's yours?"

"Mine's Susan." She laughed gayly in a high little glee.

"Susan what?"

"Susan Dodd." She evidently thought names were fun. "Paul Vane Dodd is *my* dad," she went on. "We live in that white house down there where my finger points. No, this finger. I have a puppy named Twinkle, but he is not so well today. I call *my* dad Paul."

"I got a ma," said Benny. He went over and sat in the grass at her feet, adding with a faint swagger, "I just call her ma."

"What do mas do, Benny?" Susan hopped down in the grass beside him like a flitting bird.

"Well," began Benny, feeling more comfortable in the position of an authority, "mas scrub you in the tub and tie knots in strings and give you a nickel. They always say you're filthy, but if you get a pain they rub it."

"Is that all?" Susan was apparently both surprised and relieved. "My Paul does all that. I'd much rather have Paul. You keep your ma, Benny, and I'll keep Paul." Her attention went suddenly to a bluejay which alighted on the wall a few yards away, and she called to it and beckoned it with both hands. But the bluejay didn't come.

Benny scrambled indignantly to his feet. "Bluejays can't talk. I go to school," he said flatly.

"I went to Sunday school once," put in Susan quickly, making a new bid for his interest. "They told an ugly story about a man who was going to kill his little boy and burn him up, but he did it to a ram instead. Paul told two whole new a'ventures of Princess Susanna—that's really me—and the Purple-Hooded Prince that night so I could forget about it."

Hand in hand they crossed the field toward her white house. "We do too have a picture of the Purple-Hooded Prince," said Susan. "And this is the field where I chased Mr. Red Top, who was riding a big yellow butterfly. Away over to that wall I chased him, and then I fell asleep and Paul found me and carried

me home and said: 'Susan, you must not race.' Do you really need to race, Benny?"

Behind a desolate salt-marsh border which separates it from the sound, the village of North Mercer huddles its quaint white cottages in the shades of old elms. The New York, New Haven & Hartford rockets through North Mercer without stopping, and a stream of motors on the Boston Post passes through without halt and, for the Wilcoxes, Ripleys, Bromleys, Towsons, Trouts, who have spent two and a half centuries there, time also has passed down the quiet main street without any real effect.

Motors, movies, radios, magazines have made no difference. North Mercer has an attitude toward all those modern things—just as it has an attitude toward occasional "outsiders," such as that little Mr. Dodd and his child, who with a look of pale city bewilderment come there to catch a few years' breath and be wondered and talked about and suspected until they finally disappear and are forgotten by the Wilcoxes and Bromleys and Trouts. For who in this world, the world of North Mercer, were the Dodds?

True enough, Paul Vane Dodd, as his name appeared on a few unknown, large-print four-color books of child tales and as author of infrequent and inept things in minor magazines, was no one of importance in any world. He and his little girl—in spite of rumors, one assumed the man's wife was not living—had occupied the old Ripley house in the high meadows for the past three years and, until old Dr. Towson, who went there regularly every week, let slip something which colored their quiet, isolated life with a journalistic suspense, they were left to themselves.

Afterward, little Mr. Dodd's slight figure, his blond, young-looking but serious face, was watched eagerly for indications. His habit of standing on the station platform when the New York trains went though, his smiling, undismayed receipt of flat, brown manuscript envelopes at the post office, his once-a-week drives with his small daughter in an ancient automobile which Bromley's garage had for hire—all were observed and weighed as evidence. Dodd and his daughter were said to be very gay on those drives around the countryside, and everybody admitted the child was beautiful, so beautiful that they didn't see how little Dodd could be her father, although he was, and they surmised that the little girl's mother must have been at least a great beauty—and their surmise was correct.

So the weeks of summer drifted by, like the serene passage of white clouds across the blue. Near the post-office door Esther Trout and Martha Towson, the doctor's sister, dropped their market talk and leaned closer together when little Mr. Dodd, nodding pleasantly, stepped by them on the way inside for his mail. "Queer about those Dodds, no trade or business, just mailing and getting back envelopes. Who knows but what his wife ran off with somebody? That's the way with New York folks. You'd think he'd be worried if what they say—"

"It's true," said Martha Towson. "My brother, Dr. Fred, says that much. Maybe Dodd just doesn't care. Doesn't even go to church, does he?"

Mrs. Trout's eager interest flared in her thin, colorless face. "No, he doesn't. And the little girl doesn't go to Sunday school either. The thing that worries me is my little Benny gettin' his young head full of the fairy nonsense they talk. It's been goin' on all summer, and yesterday he came home and told me that whereas he appeared to be little Benny Trout he was in reality none other than Prince Benjamin of the Magic Mud. He said the magic mud was to be found in the hollow below Dodd's house, that little Susan Dodd believes she actually is a fairy and pretends she can talk to bluejays and frogs and squirrels. The idea! Well, I won't have my Benny talkin' to a squirrel, and that's all there is to that."

"Well, the Reverend Ripley went to see Dodd about it once," said Martha Towson. "Did no good. Seems to me a real minister could have done something."

A younger woman, dark and with some sort of steady heat behind her half-shut eyes, stood near them, near enough to overhear. Her hands kept gripping and relaxing as though the emptiness of being a widow and childless at thirty-five hurt her with a physical pain. She watched the post-office door until Dodd came out with another flat brown envelope, and then she fell into step beside him. "I've baked the cake, Mr. Dodd," she said: "the orange cake you asked for."

He glanced at her vaguely. "That's very nice." And then, as if recalling his mind from distant thoughts: "Did I ask you to bake a cake, Mrs. Wilcox? Well, I probably did."

When he began fumbling in his pockets, she said: "Oh, you mustn't pay me. The cake is for Susan. I'll bring it over. How is the cook I found for you working out?"

"Very well," he said. "I meant to thank you. Or did I thank you before?" His thoughts had fled again, and he did not even hear her suggestion that if Susan's little dresses needed any mending—

At the corner he glanced at his watch, bowed and left her, turning down the short side street which led to the station. The 10:12 for New York was due.

He leaned against a battered trunk on the long platform, waiting for the train while his gaze followed the bright threads of the rails southwestward out of sight, and his imagination, like an electric current, followed them to their end amid the hazy towers and the vital, clamorous thoroughfares of Manhattan. It was still, after his years of it, the distant vista of his dreaming youth against the rich mothering soil of Illinois, and the fact that its stone had proved too crushing a weight for his slender shoulders did not destroy its poetic allure.

Paul Dodd blamed himself, for he had bungled. And New York had rolled over him as it rolls over its thousands who go back West or who, bereft even of that courage, retreat beyond the sound of battle deep into Jersey or to the meadows of Connecticut, where their place of destiny is at least no more distant than a fancied horizon. And so the fairyland vistas of the towers and parades with which Paul Dodd filled Susan's wide eyes, the Marvelous City of the Purple-Hooded Prince, came to resemble strangely the evening loom of the Plaza across the end of Central Park, the glistening pinnacle of the Ritz towers in a morning sky, the multi-colored, buoyant throng of an upper Avenue noon.

The train crashed down, grinding past the trembling platform, drawing a line of blurred faces in the long rectangle of windows. One face, emerging for the fraction of a second, made Dodd lean suddenly forward. But he subsided again. How often, when he used to wander Madison Avenue and the East Forties, he had glimpsed faces which for an instant he'd thought were—well, none of them were. He had bungled that, too.

It had been Paul Dodd's life, it seemed, to be given jobs he could not quite do. A friendly editor had told him once: "You've got no iron in you, Dodd. You always waver. It ruins your work and—probably your life." Yes, his career had gone, all but the dregs of it, and Susan's mother had gone because there, too, his craftsmanship had failed. Somewhere along the line he had al-

ways bungled. And now there was only Susan, and he wouldn't have the chance to bungle things with her.

At the curb in front of the corner drug store Dr. Towson hailed him, the old man's brooding, deeply lined face peering out from under the top of his runabout. "Just on my way over to your house, Dodd. Want to come along?"

They drove down Mercer Street, through Shore Lane, across the New Haven Pike, and finally up the hill road where Dodd's small house stood white and clear against the meadow green. "This isn't your regular day to come, is it, Doctor?"

When they stopped at the gate a shrill, piped welcome came down the wind: a tiny pink Susan and yelping, circling Twinkle, who was apparently better, had spotted their arrival from the hilltop field and started for the house. They came slowly, Susan barely skipping, remembering that she must not race.

Dr. Towson followed Dodd into his study. There was a large, flat-top desk, shelves of books, one whole row taken up by heavy medical volumes dealing with disorders of the heart. The desk was piled with manuscripts, and another neatly typed stack of sheets contained the tales he told to Susan at bedtime. She insisted upon exact repetition, and it had been necessary to write the stories out. Also, there were pipes and cigarettes and a photograph which, except for the eyes, explained why Susan was pretty. But there was a misty blue distance in Susan's eyes which did not appear in the photograph. They came from somebody else.

When they were seated Dodd said: "All right now, Doctor. What is it?"

The doctor looked up out of his thought. He liked little Dodd. Years ago he himself had started out to be a New York doctor. Things had gone wrong. "Well, it's just that I think we ought to get a specialist up here at once. I know you had Barnes, but he only confirmed my opinion. Let's try to get someone who won't—because she's getting worse, Dodd. Much worse. From the tests I made last week I'm amazed that it has gone on at all."

Paul Dodd's gaze fell. "Well, that is only what we've known all along," he said. "Sometimes I think she's getting better, but—you must be right. I'm ready, I guess."

"It's because I think you're not ready, Dodd, that I'm warning you now. What are you going to do? Afterward, I mean?"

The little man's eyes burned with an intense blue light. "That depends," he said. "When I first found out about Susan, several years ago, I couldn't understand why she had been put into the world at all. Little children are not always happy. This is not what you would call a little child's world. And so I started out to make a little child's world for Susan."

Dr. Towson took off his spectacles and wiped them with his handkerchief. "Guess you can't do that, Dodd. Pretty hard job to make a world of any kind."

"Yes," said Dodd, "it is hard. You've got to have lots of iron in you to do a job like that. It would be an easy job to—to bungle."

"You don't want a specialist, then? We could get Harvey Preston for about five hundred. Just to be sure."

"Of course I want to be sure," said Dodd. "He wouldn't come for two hundred? I've got two hundred."

"I'll tell you," said the doctor, rising, "Preston is the right sort. You give me the two hundred and I'll see if I can get him." He walked slowly down the path, with Susan holding on to his finger, and climbed into his battered runabout that was to have been turned in on a new runabout soon. It wasn't necessary, though. As a matter of fact, he was rather attached to the little old car.

Susan returned to the porch. "I thought it was my doctor day," she said. "But he said he didn't have to hear me breathe because it wasn't."

Leaning against the door jamb, Dodd smiled. "No, I think this is the day we go driving to the Chocolate Tree. We'll have an extra driving day this week."

Susan jumped up and down with excitement. "Will the Chocolate Tree be sprouting caramels, Paul?"

"Why not?" said her father.

"And can Twinkle go, too? Because my Doctor says my Twinkle is just as well as new."

Sitting at the wheel of Bromley's old machine, which—if you looked at it in the right way—was as able to make far journeys into beautiful and fabulous lands as any other magic chariot, Paul Dodd acted as chauffeur for a princess the whole afternoon. They found the precipice over which the Purple-Hooded Prince hurled the Naughty Dragon and the Peering Pool where the Princess Susanna first discovered her Beauty and the Shining

Highway down which the Princess Susanna would one day pass into the Marvelous City of the Purple-Hooded Prince.

"Only you and the Prince could drive this great big car, couldn't they, Paul?" Susan looked up at him from under the brim of her little leghorn hat. "Maybe even the Prince couldn't. How do I know I will like the Prince as well as you, Paul? Does he go to Benny's school?"

In the end they found the Chocolate Tree and, strangely enough, it *was* sprouting caramels, although Paul Dodd had to climb up to the second big branch to get even as many as four of them. Susan said she doubted that even the Prince could have got up that tree without somebody to boost him—and she was probably right. So they started for home and would have arrived there soon enough but for a delay caused by Twinkle, who from his special seat in the rear spied a gray rabbit crossing the road. Susan, moved by her Twinkle's obvious frenzy and after exacting his absolute promise that he would not bite the rabbit, let him out for a chase. Even so, she felt some uneasiness. "Because it looked to me, Paul, very much like a rabbit whose dad had told her that she must not race."

Susan was very tired that night, so weary as she sat humming to herself in her blue, downstairs playroom that it seemed too much trouble to turn the thick pages of her littlest picture book or to shake her bubble pipe hard enough to make the bubbles come off. Finally she went to a bottom drawer and began searching among the small white garments.

Paul Dodd was in his study working upon another manuscript, of which, as usual, he had great hopes, when Susan brought her nightgown in. "Put it on me, Paul," she said. "Because my eyes are getting sticky. I most probably can't even wait for my story."

He glanced at her quickly and carried her upstairs to her white bed. The moonlight poured down over the windowsill. Susan revived a bit when she was tucked in. "I might as well go to sleep listening to a story as listening to nothing, though," she said. "Tell me about Princess Susanna. Benny said I wasn't her. He doesn't know so very much, does he, Paul? Tell me about when I shall go to the City of the Prince and be chosen for the Queen of Beauty. When shall I go, Paul? Will you and Twinkle go, too?"

He drew again for her the glamorous picture of gilded towers

and bright parades. "And when the Princess appears in the front seat of her chariot, which is every bit as big as our car, all the people will stand back in amazement because she is so lovely. They will say: 'Oh, the lucky Purple-Hooded Prince to find such a darling beauty! Who is she? Who is she?' And soon the news will fly like wildfire through the whole throng that it's the beautiful little Princess Susanna herself. But the Princess Susanna will not hear that because the great roar of the Marvelous City fills the deep streets. She will simply sit there smiling and waving to all the people while she proceeds slowly onward. And soon the tallest tower of all looms up ahead and she knows that the Prince must be waiting for her there—"

Susan was asleep. A faint smile still pulled lightly at the corners of her mouth, and shadows seemed to flit across the transparent smoothness of her tiny face. Several times during the night he went to look at her, but she had only sunk into a deeper sleep.

The following afternoon Paul Dodd paced his study. He sat down and tried to write a few lines, but he could not. He went out into the hall where Dr. Towson's hat and bag rested on the table and beside them another hat and a stick. He went out upon the porch and walked up and down rapidly, mumbling and debating something with himself. Towson's runabout stood parked at the gate, and in the end he walked out and sat in the driver's seat, waiting.

Soon, although it seemed hours, Dr. Towson and the other appeared in the doorway and came slowly toward him out on the flagged walk, talking rapidly in low voices. The man from the city tapped the walk with his stick. The ear phones of his stethoscope stuck out of his handkerchief pocket. Towson cleared his throat. "Dr. Preston can give us no hope, Dodd," he said. "In fact, quite the reverse. He thinks it is astonishing that she has lasted through the past six months with her heart in that shape."

Dr. Preston murmured something about "These scarlet-fever hearts. I'm afraid she has not many days, Mr. Dodd. A fainting spell or two first perhaps. There is really nothing you can do."

"Oh, yes," said Paul Dodd, "there is very much that I can do, although I have no doubt about Susan's condition. We just had to be sure, didn't we Towson?" He began an awkward

thanks for Dr. Preston's coming out for so little, but Towson interrupted, and then the two of them drove off and left him.

Paulson's Park consisted of a few long board tables set in the edge of a small pine grove, a paint-scarred, tent-covered merry-go-round, a stretch of meadow, and a pathway leading sharply down to the strip of beach on the Sound. The Sunday-school picnic would not have been considered bona fide held elsewhere than in Paulson's Park, and the bright and blue day at the first warm edge of September which had fallen to their lot found the usual groups of summer-clad ladies hovering over the luncheon baskets, setting places with paper napkins and cardboard spoons. Most of the children, as an unnecessary stimulus to their appetites, were in for a swim. Afterward would come the picnic feast.

Paul Dodd and Susan and, of course, Twinkle were down on the beach with the others. He had put her into a tiny slip of a blue bathing suit with a white fish embroidered on it and, although she could not really go into the water, she had quite a time, as she said, wetting her toes. That meant letting the fan-like spread of the gentle waves come in over her scampering feet. In the end, however, she came running back to him breathless and frightened because a whole wave had gone over Benny Trout's head. Benny himself, spitting salt water and entirely undismayed, regarded her terror with stolid masculine disdain, while Twinkle, with a rime of sea foam on his nose, cocked his querulous little head and emitted a ludicrous growl.

Mrs. Wilcox, dark-eyed and yearning, apparently getting some relief from the activity of her hands, presided over the Dodds' table. She had prepared the basket and, as Susan put it, they really did have ginger-cake men with white sugar eyes and lemonade which was as pink as you please, and would Paul kindly not watch to see how many cups of it she drank? Although their small group was the object of many curious glances, the visiting from table to table going on generally among the others seemed to pass them by.

The picnic luncheon was nearly over. Mrs. Wilcox had produced as a climax another orange cake with "Susan" writen on it in blue icing, and Susan herself and Paul Dodd and even Mrs. Wilcox clapped their hands while Twinkle barked uncertainly.

Then Twinkle disappeared. The flapping edge of Mrs. Trout's tablecloth caught his momentary fancy, and he watched its

dangling, tantalizing movement above his head for some time. Then he made a jump.

The crash, the screaming, the excited voices, and Twinkle's astonished yelping as Mrs. Trout belabored him with a long heavy kitchen spoon all happened so quickly. The whole picnic rushed to the scene of excitement, and in its van was a tiny, golden-headed fury in a white-and-blue dress who dived under the wreckage of the table to gather her darling up in her arms and rescue him from further punishment. "You stop!" she shouted at Mrs. Trout, her high treble sounding above the din. "You stop or my Paul will—will— I'll call my bumble bees, and they'll sting you and sting you—"

Mrs. Trout was equally and less excusably beside herself. "Take your nasty little dog," she said. "Why doesn't your father keep the both of you at home where you belong—with your crazy talk—if he really is your father? God only knows who you Dodds are—"

Martha Towson, wiping strawberry ice cream from her skirt, joined in: "Yes, if she's too particular for the Sunday school she ought to be too particular for the Sunday-school picnic."

Silence smothered the clamor as quickly as it had arisen. There was a sudden retreat of the whole circle from its center, as if they had just remembered. Susan lay where she had fallen, a collapsed little bundle of white. And then Paul Dodd broke through and gathered her up in his arms. For a moment he stood there with her, trembling, but he did not seem such a little man. He seemed colossal, towering, while he trembled.

That was an instant of swift insight for Paul Dodd. He felt Susan's faint and fast breathing upon his cheek, and he knew that she had not gone. She had fainted, and he knew that if she had not fainted, her world—the gossamer world of delight which he and she had created for her few years—would have burst like one of her soap bubbles against the rough surface of a more real and rugged world. He knew that he would have failed again; that he had almost bungled as of old. But she had fainted before the bubble burst, and the Princess Susanna breathed softly in his arms. The tools of his infinite and delicate fabrication were still in his hands, which, although they trembled, had not yet struck amiss.

He was sitting beside Susan's white bed when she opened her wide little eyes and smiled as though everything were gay—if one

but knew. She and Paul knew what a delightful business everything was. "Do you know what a dream I had, Paul? Well, I dreamed that we had started out for the Marvelous City. Don't you think it's about time we did start, Paul? The Purple Prince may get tired of waiting. He might just take any old little princess. I think it's time we started. I mean really, Paul."

Mrs. Wilcox and Dr. Towson waited downstairs. The doctor had told Paul Dodd that he must be ready, for she would not last until morning. But Dodd knew better. He and Susan had a rendezvous to keep before she could go. So he remained there only until the white, blinking lids came down over her eyes again. Then he went downstairs, stopped in his study for a small roll of ten-dollar bills which he had left in his desk drawer, and, mumbling something to the doctor about going to the village, left the house. Dr. Towson put his hand on Mrs. Wilcox's arm. "No," he said, "let him alone. Dodd knows what he's doing."

Susan lasted until morning, the bluest and earliest and gayest morning she had ever seen. Paul was driving, and she, in her very best white dress, her white socks, her patent-leather slippers and everything, rested comfortably against a pillow in the seat beside him; for naturally she would not look her best when they arrived if she were tired. In the tonneau was a big brown paper bundle which Paul had picked up in the village, and on the back seat, with his paw carefully bound and a savoir faire equal to the occasion, sat the apparently unrepentant culprit of yesterday. So Bromley's old car struck the Boston Post Road, to give it an unsuitable name, and headed southwestward for the Marvelous City of the Purple-Hooded Prince.

"I suppose it's far away over hill and down dale, isn't it, Paul?" asked Susan. "Could anybody but you find it?" She was like some beautifully fragile figurette in ivory with two intensely blue little dots painted in for eyes. It was an effort for her to talk, but no one told her not to. She just talked whenever she wanted, although as a mark of deference to the dignity of the day she had expressly forbidden her Twinkle to do any of his barking.

New Haven did not notice, and neither did Bridgeport. It was none of Stamford's business, and Larchmont and Greenwich could think what they pleased. Susan was asleep most of the way, waking for brief moments to ask if they were almost there. Once she seemed to have fainted, but that lasted only a few minutes,

and soon Susan roused herself, laughing with her usual glee. "What will Benny Trout say when he sees me wearing my crown, Paul? Well, he can have my bubble pipe."

Farther down, for purposes of his own, Paul Dodd turned aside from the main route upon a road which led diagonally into high ground south of White Plains. They climbed a long hill, and then he brought the car to a halt, waiting for Susan to discover for herself. Presently she leaned forward, excited, pointing with three fingers at once. "Look, Paul! See? 'Way over there. It's it!"

A hazy distance stretched away below them, and at its farthest, seeming to appear above a faintly purple border of horizon cloud, rose a stalactite profusion of towers, visible intermittently and then only at their sun-gilded peaks.

"It's just as you said, Paul," said Susan. But presently, smiling and sighing in her content, she was asleep again.

She must have been asleep for a long time. When she opened her eyes and sat up again, she could hardly believe it. She was in the very heart of the Marvelous City, with all the great houses made of big stones and all the shining windows and all the twenty hundred motors in two great parades, one going each way, and all the thirty million hundred people lining the wide street and, but for the great roar of the Marvelous City, she knew she would hear them say: "Oh, it's the beautiful little Princess Susanna herself."

Susan could see very plainly that all eyes were bent upon her triumphal chariot—as, indeed, many of them were—and her sense of obligation rose to the moment. She stood up in the seat and waved and smiled, especially when anybody waved to her. Occasionally she gave a sly glance at her Paul, as if to say: "We knew it would be like this, didn't we?"

Up ahead a whistle blew to herald her approach, and a great light blinked red. Their car stopped when a huge man in blue and buttons held up his hand and saluted them, and then still another parade passed in review right before their eyes. Susan was so thrilled. She stood up again and waved to everybody who waved to her.

Subsiding when they moved on again, she watched Paul to see how he was taking all this. "Don't you think we ought to be hurrying on to the Prince?" she asked. "Maybe he won't like everybody seeing me first. Oh!—is that his palace?" She

pointed down the avenue at a massive structure of steel and stone rearing in terraced sections until its bright dome seemed drawn against the sky.

"His palace is taller even than that," said Paul Dodd.

"Oh!" said Susan again. "And will he be waiting in his purple robe?"

"He will probably come out on the balcony and throw down flowers when you come," said Paul.

Susan's impressions were blurred. Twice more she sat up and pointed out sky-reaching towers which surely must be "it." But each time Paul said, "Taller than that, Susan." Magic names were also on Paul Dodd's lips. They had come down Fifth Avenue and crossed to Park and now moved slowly northward between its square bulks of stone toward a stupendous white column, conceived in the mighty poetry of the genius of New York and mounting infinitely to some pin-point zenith of the imagination against the blue. Some called it the Ritz Towers and people lived there and paid rent, but Paul Dodd called it the Palace of the Purple-Hooded Prince. "There, Susan," he said. "There!"

While they rolled onward Susan lay back against her pillow, reaching out her hand toward the great white tower as if she wanted to pull it to her. Then it loomed suddenly over them, and the car stopped still at the very gate. "Where is he, Paul?" she whispered. "Is he putting on his purple hood?"

"I think he is," said Paul Dodd. "I think he will soon appear on that balcony. Do you see the balcony, Susan? Now I will go inside and announce that the beautiful little Princess Susanna is here at last."

He took the brown paper bundle from the tonneau and strode past an astonished doorman into the dim interior. He was gone only a minute, a portentous minute for Paul Dodd. But two of his ten-dollar bills and the luck of finding an Irish bell boy was all that he needed.

Susan did not even look at him when he took his seat at the wheel again, although her hand reached out and closed upon his fingers. Her rapt gaze was upon the lowest balcony, not very far above their heads. Paul Dodd's eyes were upon the balcony, too, although he could not see. He could only wait for Susan's exclamation of delight, her quick, tight grip upon his fingers while his arm supported her. "Oh!" she said. "See him, Paul! He has on his purple robe, and his crown has golden points. Catch

the flowers, Paul. He is throwing me his blossoms." Then he felt her little form relax and he knew that the Princess Susanna had been crowned forevermore in a kingdom which was never in this world.

Bromley's old machine moved slowly forward to the next traffic stop with Paul Vane Dodd at the wheel. Once more his stature seemed to have increased until he was not a little man at all. He was a man whose soul was full of iron, and cased in the iron was a rare and precious treasure which could never be taken from him and the possession of which made him mighty and unconquerable. It was a treasure he had made himself, without bungling and with fine craftsmanship to the very end. He smiled at the stone of New York, which was only putty to be molded after all. He spoke the name of Susan, and his voice drowned out the roar of a metropolis.

North Mercer saw no more of the Dodds, and, although the name of Paul Vane Dodd became known to most people, the people of North Mercer never even wondered if that could be the one they had known as "little Dodd."

But once they might have seen him, because he stopped at Bromley's garage to have some air put in the tires of his huge, shining new car, and if they might have been excused for not recognizing him, they should at least have known the lively but dignified interest which his four-footed companion was expending upon the garage cat. When his car was ready Paul Vane Dodd drove on to a grove of trees, one of which was said to be a chocolate tree that sprouted caramels, although he saw no indication of any such phenomenon now. So he went on looking for other things, a tiny brook-made pond which had once appeared to be an ideal Peering Pool should any princesses happen to be passing by that way.

Afterward he turned back across the winding meadow road and stopped his car on the hilltop. He climbed out and sat down on the gray stone wall. A bluejay joined him, not ten yards away, and a big yellow butterfly flopped by overhead. Climbing across the meadow from the direction of the mud puddle which used to be down in the hollow, a black spot was becoming distinguishable as the figure of a small though not so very small, venturing boy.

PETER PROJECTS[1]

By MARIEL BRADY

THE drawring teacher looked at the clock and closed her copy of Longfellow. Genevieve Gertrude sighed with relief. The lesson was over and she would not have to ill'strate a pome to-day. P'raps before next week the drawring teacher might fall and break her leg or somepin, for overnight the weather had changed. The streets were slippery, and there was always hope in Genevieve Gertrude's cross-word puzzle dictionary.

"That will do for this morning," said the drawring teacher. "It was very poor work, *very* poor, indeed. Miss Hewitt, for the seventeenth of next month I am planning an exhibit, a *large* one. Have you any ideas—anything you think your grade *could* do?"

Genevieve Gertrude, watching her teacher, saw that young woman's face slip, and then snap back into its usual calm; but two red spots had come into her cheeks, and she kept tapping the toe of her pump on the floor.

"The seventeenth? That's only a little over three weeks off. It's hard to get anything elaborate from these small children in so short a time."

The drawring teacher looked awful cross at Miss Hewitt. She wrote somepin very fast in her little, red notebook, snapped a 'lastic 'round it, and marched to the door.

"You will do the *best* you can," she said, and at her tone the shivers went down Genevieve Gertrude's back. "Why not let the children project for themselves? You know Mr. Cornish likes to keep this school up-to-date. Next week I shall expect to see what you have worked out. Good morning, Miss Hewitt. Good morning, boys and girls."

"Good morning, Miss Bronson," echoed the little hypocrites of Grade 5 sweetly—and drew a long breath. It had been a strenuous half hour.

"Arithmetic books, page 64, first ten problems," said Miss

[1] From *Genevieve Gertrude,* by Mariel Brady; copyright, 1928, by D. Appleton & Co. Reprinted by permission of the author and the publishers.

Hewitt crisply, "and if I hear *one sound*— Well, Peter, what is it *now?*"

"My toot' is came out," announced Peter, holding up the gory treasure. "Can I go down to the basement and wash—"

"Leave the room at once," commanded Miss Hewitt, turning her head away, "and will you *ever* learn to say may instead of can?"

Peter grinned, showing his tongue through the space where the tooth used to be, and slammed the door behind him. Grade 5, heads bent over the desks, went busily to work.

It was snowing in a listless, discouraged manner—wet snow, driven by an east wind. The empty nest in the maple tree near the window was a little mound of whiteness.

Genevieve Gertrude, looking up from the intricacies of proberlems, noticed the nest and sighed. It was so much nicer to think of the robins warm and happy in the southland than of hard ole 'rithmetic. The proberlem said: "A farmer bought 36 bu. of apples @ $4 a bu. He sold ⅔ of them @ .08 a qt., ½ of the remainder @ .10 a qt. and the rest @ .12 a qt. Find his gain or loss."

The reader shook her red curls. Hm'm. Now *why* didn't them ole farmers find out for theirselfs how much they had ought to cheat folkses, and not expect the school children to be a-doing it all the time?

She glanced across the aisle. Richard was working hard, his lips compressed. Irma was gazing at the ceiling, her chin cupped in her pink palms. No one would dream that her pretty foot was warily pushing a note over to Genevieve Gertrude's desk. The note said:

Can you do the 2 exampul becaus I ca'nt. I do'nt like appils mutch do you. If you get the anser you no me Vieve. Rick is a Pig. He has got it and he wo'nt tell.

Genevieve Gertrude bent a black look upon Master Rick. Yes, sir! It was a man's world whichever way you took it. And men hadn't *never* played fair in any apple business, neither. In Irma's Sunday school they learned you 'bout Adam and Eve. They lived by theirselfs in a lovely garden and there was one apple-tree what they mustn't touch, cross their hearts. But one day Adam said, "This is our jam, Evy, but *you* pick it, 'cause

I think my eyes is better'n yours, so I'll watch and see if anybody is a-coming." So that poor lamebrain Eve picked the apple, but Adam reached over her head and snitched it. He said to her, "It's all wormy on this side, dear. I'll just keep a-nibbling 'round till I find a nice place for you," and he had it all et but the core when somebody come! Then he blamed the whole thing on Eve—and all *she'd* got was a seed in her windpipe. Yes, sir! And now here was Rick, acting just as mean as Adam 'bout this ole apple proberlem!

The door opened, and in came Master Peter, much cleaner in spots, and with his mane of hair plastered to his head—all except his cowlick. *That* always stuck up straight.

Miss Hewitt glanced from her record book to the clock and raised her eyebrows.

"Fifteen minutes, Peter! Were you taking a full bath, may I ask?"

And then Miss Hewitt stopped and got as red as anythin', for right spang behind Peter was the terrible Mr. Cornish hisself, and behind Mr. Cornish was a jingly lady and a fat, little boy with big glasses on, and his nose a-running somepin awful.

"Er-hem," said Mr. Cornish, a-washing his hands with air like he done always. "Miss Hewitt, this is Mrs. Jones—"

"Mrs. Bayard Livingston Jones," said the jingly lady, a-looking at Mr. Cornish through her glasses what was glued on a stick. "Chetwynd, use your handkerchief."

"Yes, muth-uh," said the fat little boy, and sneezed three times.

"Er—I will leave Mrs. Jones with you." Mr. Cornish walked to the window and put up the shade. "It looks like a severe storm, Miss Hewitt. Such a change from last week! Good morning, Mrs. Jones. The little boy will be quite happy in this grade, I'm sure."

Mr. Cornish shut the door, like he couldn't get away quick enough to suit him, and then Miss Hewitt stood up.

"Genevieve Gertrude," she said with the company smile, "get a chair for Mrs. Jones, will you, dear?"

Genevieve Gertrude brought a chair, the best one. Mrs. Bayard Livingston Jones sat down carefully and threw back her fur coat so that you could see the nice lining. She looked hard at Genevieve Gertrude.

"Quaint name," she said. "Imagine it! Genevieve Ger—

Chetwynd, use your handkerchief! My *dear* Miss Hewitt, you simply cannot conceive of the colds that child has, one after another. And Miss Meade's house is like a *barn!* We are staying there until we can get *just* the place we want, you know. There is one on Prospect Avenue which *may* suit, but one has to be *so* careful and Mr. Jones is *so* particular. In the last town—"

"Pardon me," said Miss Hewitt, her pencil going tap, tap on her desk, "but I think the little boy will be more comfortable if we find him a seat. He's to be in this grade, I understand. Suppose you take the seat in front of Genevieve Gertrude—Chetwynd, isn't it?"

Chetwynd raised his puffy eyelids for one brief moment and then slid into the chair. His plump feet in shiny new rubbers dangled fully three inches above the floor.

His mother lifted her glasses again and looked at Grade 5.

"They *seem* like a nice set of children," she said after a moment. "You are *sure* there are no undesirables? In the last town we lived they were simply *boors*. Imagine it! In less than a day they were calling Chetwynd, *Chatty*. They said he talked too much—and there the poor child never opens his mouth. You are *sure* that little girl with the curls, and that boy in the back seat are really— Chetwynd, use your handkerchief!"

Miss Hewitt did not seem to be a-listening to the jingly lady. She was not a-looking at Chetwynd Jones neither, a-setting awful solumn in his seat, his hands folded on the desk. No, she was a-staring straight at some one 'way back in the room! Genevieve Gertrude put one foot under her which raised her a good bit and followed the direction of her teacher's stern gaze.

It was Peter Miss Hewitt was a-looking at! Peter had bent a piece of copper wire into the shape of glasses and tied it on the end of his ruler, and he was a-making faces and a-wrinkling his nose like a rabbit, and Irma had stuffed her handkerchuff into her mouth so she wouldn't laugh out loud.

"Peter," said Miss Hewitt, and Genevieve Gertrude knew that if Mrs. Jones were not there, her teacher's voice would not have been so sweet, "may I borrow your ruler? Peter, Mrs. Jones, is one of my best boys. He's a Cub, too. I hope he and Chetwynd will be friends."

Peter, red as fire, came up with the ruler. The wire was gone.

"Thank you, Peter," said Miss Hewitt, smiling into his eyes. "Take this blue pencil and correct the arithmetic papers. Peter

and Genevieve Gertrude haven't been here very long, you see. They came from the city where the system is different and they find our ways a little strange. Chetwynd has had work in problems, Mrs. Jones?"

"Oh, yes, indeed," said the jingly Mrs. Jones, a-turning the glasses on Peter. "He's *quite* clever at such things. Imagine it! I could never learn even addition. It simply *would* not come right. My check book is always a hopeless mess. It takes my husband *hours* every month to straighten it.

"I think I'll leave you now, Miss Hewitt. This storm—I take cold *so* easily and then Mr. Jones worries himself *sick*. You'll insist that no nicknames are allowed, won't you? You see, before Chetwynd was born, I spent hours and hours thinking of a name which should be truly distinctive. Imagine it! But I *really* did. I'm like that. Chetwynd, use your handkerchief and say good-bye to mother."

Chetwynd looked up from his paper. His eyes watered and he sniffled loudly before he spoke.

"Good-bye, muth-uh."

Genevieve Gertrude looked at Mrs. Jones as she stood up. Her bracerlets went clank, clank. Long, jet fringe on her dress tinkled. She smelled awful strong of vi'lets, and she hadn't no chin to drawr in profile. Genevieve Gertrude knew all about profiles. They had drawred one last week for Miss Bronson. People should have a chin or you couldn't drawr a good one. Miss Bronson said so. But Mrs. Jones hadn't a smithereen of one. She had a nawful little foot, though. She was a-holding it out for Miss Hewitt to see.

"I think I'll phone for a taxi," she was a-saying. "My pumps are *so* thin. You see, I wear a two and a half—I have the *worst* time getting shoes—and Mr. Jones likes to see me in these silly, little things. He's always telling me what a Cinderella I am. Imagine it! Good-bye, dear Miss Hewitt. I'll see you again *soon*. You'll just keep an eye on Chetwynd, won't you? I wouldn't have him contaminated for the world. You know how a *mother* feels. I've heard you spoken of so highly, and I'm sure you've said such *sensible* things. You know I'm not one of those snobbish people, who look upon teachers as mere public servants—not at all. I'm *very broad*. *Good*-bye, Miss Hewitt."

The door closed. Miss Hewitt set right down and looked straight in front of her. The room was awful noisy, but she did

not tap her pencil on her desk. She did not seem to see Irma and Anne Kincaid a-whispering and a-giggling. She didn't seem to see Peter, a-sneezing into his handkerchuff with his mouth opened like the Mammoth Cave where the blind fishes is. She didn't even see the paper a-being passed 'round with "imajin it" wrote on it. She just set there, like the gravy image the heathen gave presents to in the Sunday-school lessons. Then the recess bell rung, and she was Miss Hewitt again.

Genevieve Gertrude got sent in for hitting old Mr. Parmalee in the eye with a snowball. She had aimed the ball at Peter, but Mr. Parmalee was a-taking a short cut acrosst the school yard and got right in the way. It was only a squushy ball, too—not packed a bit—but he was as mad as anythin'! He shook his cane, and said she was a young hussy and bound straight for The Pit. And then the mean ole monitor sent her in.

On the stairs was Miss Hewitt and three more teachers. The other teachers was a-laughing, but Miss Hewitt was red in the face and her eyes snapped.

"And on top of Bronson's edict, too," she was a-saying. "Lord, if a kindly cyclone would only remove that woman before I commit murder! And then this Elegant Elsie breezes in with her broad ideas about public servants. .*Imagine it!* And there I'd never opened my mouth. I didn't get a chan—"

The pretty Miss Smith seen Genevieve Gertrude a-coming up. She stopped laughing awful quick, and poked Miss Hewitt in the back, and Miss Hewitt turned 'round and said very fast, "And as I was saying a minute ago the weather report says rain to-night. Why, Genevieve Gertrude, are you sent in? Then go right up and erase the geography board."

It snowed and rained and hailed the whole day, but the clouds kep' a-getting darker. Just before three o'clock Mr. Cornish come in, a-washing his hands like he was nervous.

"I'm afraid we are in for it," he told Miss Hewitt. "Such weather for November! It's beginning to rain. If it freezes, I rather think you'll hear the no-session signal in the morning. Mrs. Jones has telephoned. She's sending a taxi for Reginald, isn't it?"

"Chetwynd," said Miss Hewitt, a-looking up from the hist'ry book. It was a nice chapter, too. Even Peter was quiet. It was 'bout the Aztecs. They had temples, all gold on the outside, and blood on the inside. Their gods *liked* blood. When there was a

war, the Aztecs killed their prisoners in the temple and et some, 'cause they was cannibals; and when they wanted their gods to tell their fortunes instead of ouija boards they killed a little child and cut its heart out, and dipped cakes in its blood and gave them to the idols. Chetwynd Jones was a fraidy cat and his eyes got red but all the other children said, "O-oo-oo"—just like you do in the movies. And then Mr. Cornish had to go and come in!

"Well, Chetwynd, then," said Mr. Cornish, a-pulling down his mouth. "By-the-way, if we *should* have school, there'll be a representative from our book firm here some time to-morrow. He has a new line of readers. I wish you'd look them over carefully and report to me. Tell your children to listen for the whistle at 7:45 if it storms in the morning."

He went all 'round the room, a-peeking at the writing papers, and then walked out. Miss Hewitt closed the hist'ry book, and took off her glasses. She looked awful nice 'thout her glasses.

"You heard what Mr. Cornish said, boys and girls? Well, then, if the whistle blows, there's no school. Remember that, Chetwynd. You're new, and you *might* not understand about it. Never mind the applause, Peter and Richard. One more thing. You all know I come in by trolley. If there *should* be school and I'm late or anything, I want you to go ahead and open school *just* as we always do. *Project!* You know we looked that up in our dictionaries yesterday, didn't we? Well, if I'm not here, Grade 5 is to project. Understand? And—let me see—yes, Peter may take charge."

For once, as Genevieve Gertrude's father said, the weather man earned two cents of his salary. It poured pitchforks all evening. It poured until two o'clock in the morning. Then it turned cold as Greenland and froze the deep slush into hills and valleys and plateaux of ice. But the sun was shining at half-past seven and no whistle blew.

Genevieve Gertrude's mother did not want her to go to school. She stayed in bed and talked about winter in the Godforsaken country. She was still talking when Genevieve Gertrude brought in a cup of coffee with the cream from the top of the bottle—she always had the cream—and the eggs cooked just right.

"—and on Eighth Avenue the steam is on when you get up, and a delicatessen handy with everything all ready to eat. My God! Livin' in the country when there's trains runnin' to Grand Cen-

tral! Your father's the biggest Brazil nut that ever came from Australia."

"South America," said Genevieve Gertrude, cracking the eggs, "and if father likes the country best—better, I mean—why, he likes it, that's all. The girls ain't near so snippy now. I'm a-getting used to it myself."

"He's talkin' 'bout leavin' this apartment and gettin' a house farther out where he can have chickens and a garden. Garden! Puttin' seeds in the ground, hoein' the plants and then eatin' 'em! Ain't that a grand way to spend a summer? And listenin' to the crickets and katydids and kiddin' yourself it's a jazz orchestra. And breathin' the air he says is like wine! Not like any pre-war wine *I* remember it ain't. But it's the life, your father says. My God! If I could get back to N' Yawk to live I'd kiss every pavin' stone on the block."

Genevieve Gertrude tiptoed out. There was no use interrupting her mother to say she must really go to school. It would only make her nervous. But—a house and garden! Then she would be truly a nice little girl—like Irma and Mary Elizabeth and Anne Kincaid. There would be a hammock, a couch hammock, on the porch, and p'raps a tennis court on the lawn, and she could have parties with fruit punch and snap crackers. Of course, Irma would get the prettiest cap. She *always* did or else the boys swapped 'round till she had the one she wanted. It must be lovely to be born an Irma. An' Irma's mother made your clo'es, and they was all 'broidered on the pockets and they had tucks with little weenty stitches, and you went to Sunday school until you was *growed up!* The furniture in your house was dark and shiny, and you had candles on the dining-room table when your father come home to supper, and your mother *never* talked loud a-tall.

She put on a white apron sometimes and went in the kitchen to make cake, and you could scrape the frosting bowl, and all the teachers called you "Sweetheart," and your father took you on hikes Sat'days, and there was silk pads under the things in your bureau drawers, and they smelled sweet, but not like the perfume your mother bought in bottles. It was queer 'bout that nice smell. Irma said it was some kind of a *root,* but of course that couldn't be right.

It took a nawful long while to get to school. The sidewalks was like glass and you couldn't even *see* the trolley tracks. The trees

was dressed in diamonds and pearls but they snapped and cracked every minute.

Genevieve Gertrude hurried all she could. You *must* not be late, ice or no ice. If you was, you had to go to the terrible Mr. Cornish and he ast you was your alarm clock slow *again,* or was you just a-counting the cracks in the walk, or was your grandmother dead or was you a-buying gum in Tony, the Greek's?

Not many children was in the room, only 'bout half of them, and no Miss Hewitt was there! Irma was there, and Anne, and Mary Elizabeth and Peter—and Chetwynd Jones had came in a taxi with leggins up to his waist and a note from his mother a-saying he was not to go out 'thout them on, and some one would have to help him 'cause the buttonholes was too large, and as fast as you buttoned two buttons, three come unbuttoned. She hoped the children was the helpful kind. Genevieve Gertrude read the note 'cause it was pinned on Chetwynd's breast with a safety pin.

Just before nine o'clock Mr. Cornish come in. He had a man with him. Genevieve Gertrude knew who *he* was. He was the book agent. Her mother had said you must always get your foot in the door before the fresh things got theirs, but this one looked quite nice. He wore glasses, but his eyes was just as blue and they twinkled. His teeth was awful white, too, and he smiled a lot and he had a very clean collar.

"Now, boys and girls," said Mr. Cornish, a-catching some air and a-washing his hands very fast, "the trolleys aren't running and so your teacher isn't here. Neither are three others. I've sent taxis for them, but I wonder if you couldn't get along by yourselves for a while. *Project!* That's what up-to-date children ought to do. See if you can entertain this gentleman for a half hour or so. How many hands do I see? Ah, that's fine! Then I'll leave you with these young people, Mr. Kent. I think they'll show you something worth while."

Mr. Cornish went out in a great hurry. Genevieve Gertrude brought a chair and the book agent sat down near Miss Hewitt's desk and crossed his legs. Everybody was still.

Genevieve Gertrude looked hard at Peter. Miss Hewitt had said he was to be in charge. Peter rose slowly and came up front.

"I guess you don't want to hear ole songs and pomes, do you?" he ast the book agent. "We get awful sick of 'em our own selfs. Project means somethin' new, don't it? Well, first I'll sing you a song my uncle learned me. My uncle's in vauddaville. It's a

good song, but Miss Hewitt wouldn't let me sing it in our minstrel show. This is how it goes."

Peter crossed his hands at the wrist and looked up at the flag. He never even winked once. His voice wasn't so very nice. It made Genevieve Gertrude think of the way the fire siren whined when it was dying away.

"While the organ peeled potatoes,
Lard was rendered by the choir,
While the sexton tolled the church bell,
Some one set the church on fire,
'Holy smoke!' the preacher shouted,
In the rush he lost his hair;
Now his head resembles heaven—
For there is no parting there!"

Some of the boys clapped real loud. The book agent coughed pretty hard. He changed his left leg to his right knee. Irma twitched her nose.

"It isn't a *very* nice song," she said. "It isn't class'cal. I'm learning class'cal pieces. My mother says we should only sing class'cal songs."

"Well, I'm projectin', ain't I?" Peter was cross. "When you're projectin' you don't know how things is going to turn out. They might be that word you said, and they might be good. Now I'll read you my story and then some of you kids has got to do a turn. I ain't goin' to do *all* the projectin'!"

The book agent leaned forward. He smiled at Peter's scowly face.

"I liked that song, myself," he said, "even if it isn't classical. It's funny, anyhow."

Genevieve Gertrude raised her hand.

"Do you mean funny peculiar, or funny ha-ha?" she inquired politely.

Mr. Kent appeared to swallow his tonsils. His eyes winked very fast.

" 'Cause," explained his mentor gravely, "our teacher don't allow us to say funny when we mean peculiar. It's bad English, you know. I'm just a-telling you 'cause I think you could sell more books if you had somebody learn you good English. Not so many ladies would stick their foot in the crack of the door before you done it."

"Thanks," said the book agent. "I'll remember that." He took out his handkerchief and sneezed into it. Peter looked at the clock and pulled a folded paper from his pocket.

"We got to hurry," he announced briskly. "Miss Hewitt may come before we get through projectin'. Now this story is one I wrote to read in assembly but my teacher wouldn't let me. I don't remember why. It's called:

HOW I WOULD SPEND FIVE DOLLARS

When you have five dollars to spend don't waste it in bying candy soda or gum. Buy senserble things with it like good cloths, a cap and a good thick overcoat, some gloves and shoes and warm undercloths. Buy two sets. Most everybody needs two sets of undercloths. Pay your bord bill to and don't be a bum. Get a good job and work hard at it. Don't lofe around the corners pay your bord and be desent. Then if you have eny mony left over you can buy some sport things like a good baseball, a bat, a electric ingin and a lot of track, and skates and maybe just a little candy. Thats how to spend five dollars.

Mr. Kent, the book agent, got up and peeked into the hall. When he came in, he took off his glasses and wiped them.

"Peter," he said, "you have a practical mind. I congratulate you. You'll never be a mere book agent."

"You bet you," said Peter, putting his story back in his pocket. "I'm goin' to be a foreman like my ole man. Now, see here, you kids, and you girls special. It's up to you now. Genevieve Gertrude, *you* can begin to project."

The walls seemed to crowd in upon Genevieve Gertrude.

"Shall I say, 'Here hath been dawning another blue day'?" she asked rising.

"Naw," Peter's voice was scornful. "Somethin' *new*. Immertate somebody. You can do that good."

A murmur rose from the back of the room.

"Miss Bronson! Immertate Miss Bronson, Genevieve Gertrude!"

Light broke across that young person's face. She seized a book from Miss Hewitt's desk and opened it.

"Good morning, boys and girls," she said crisply.

"Good morning, Miss Bronson," giggled Grade 5.

"This morning," announced Miss Bronson, fluttering the pages,

"we will ill'strate a gra'and pome. Now set right up and lissen. Don't you dast touch a crayola till you're told! Don't you dast wink! Don't you dast *breathe!* Irma, you may work at the board."

The pretty Irma tossed her golden fluff of hair, pulled down her brief skirts and walked gracefully to the blackboard. She picked up a piece of chalk and stood waiting, her charming head bent deferentially toward the instructor.

"Now, you mizzable little fools, you lissen," commanded Miss Bronson loudly. "This is the pome:

"By the shining Big Sea-Water
Stood the wigwam of Nokomis,
Daughter of the moon, Nokomis.
Dark behind it rose the forest,
Rose the dark and gloomy pine trees,
Rose the firs with cones upon them;
Bright before it beat the water,
Beat the shining Big Sea-Water."

Miss Bronson closed the book. She clapped her hands.

"Begin! You have the pitcher. Make it!"

Rapidly she passed up and down the aisles where the silent children pretended to draw on their desks. Irma, at the board, had stopped working. She stood frowning at her sketch.

Miss Bronson approached. She seized Irma by the shoulder and swung her around.

"Do you call *that* a pitcher?" she demanded. "*Lookit* that moon, big as a dishpan in a two inch sky. *Lookit* the wigwam—bigger'n any of your trees! *Lookit* them trees a-bending every which way! *Lookit* that *water!* Didn't I say *sea*-water? *Didn't* I? Well, then, where's your big waves? That water looks like rubber. Take your seat! I'll report this class to the super'tendent. If it was teached proper— I *never* saw such damn' fool ch—"

Miss Bronson's hand flew to her mouth. Her head drooped.

"I—I done it again," she said faintly.

There was a silence. The book agent shut the little book in which he had been writing and leaned forward, but he did not speak.

It was Peter who did that. Peter got up, went into the cloakroom and came out, a small, brown bottle in his hand.

"It's too bad, Genevieve Gertrude," he said, and held out the vial.

Genevieve Gertrude turned scarlet, then pale. Her heart was jumping like a frightened jack rabbit, but she clinched her teeth and took the bottle. There was a white label on it and black letters on that. The letters said—Hydrogen Peroxide.

Irma came swiftly from her seat. She put an arm about Genevieve Gertrude's shoulders and faced the book agent.

"I don't think she *ought* to take it. She didn't *mean* to say it. It just slipped out. She was so busy being Miss Bronson, you know."

The book agent got up. His face was very queer, and he looked at Genevieve Gertrude over his glasses.

"I'm a little at sea," he said slowly. "why the peroxide, Peter?"

"She has to take it when she cusses," explained Peter easily. "Not much—just washes her mouth out."

"My mother says she hears it home." Irma's lovely blue eyes were flashing. "And she *never* went to Sunday school before she came here. Do you think she *ought* to take it?"

"Genevieve Gertrude," said the book agent solemnly, "does Miss Bronson say 'damn'?"

"Not yet, but she *thinks* it," blurted Genevieve Gertrude, worrying her lip. "You can see she thinks it all the time. But I'll take it. Peter says I ought to."

"Well," said Peter stoutly, "if Miss Hewitt was here you'd have to take it, and *you know it.*"

Genevieve Gertrude eyed the unrelenting moralist a moment, then she pulled the cork fiercely and tilted her chin—

Grade 5 looked at its shoes. There was a horrid silence for an instant—then a gurgle, a strangling sob, a choked-back cough, and Genevieve Gertrude, red as a turkey cock, was spewing cotton into her handkerchief.

"I—I didn't cry!" she panted. "I didn't cry, anyways."

"No, you didn't," conceded Peter promptly, putting the peroxide on Miss Hewitt's desk. "You're a pretty good sport for a girl but Chetwynd Jones is a sis. Lookit him leakin' all over everything. He needs a plumber."

It was true. Chetwynd's puffy eyes were closed but they were running as badly as his nose.

Anne Kincaid spoke up with asperity.

"He's nervous like my aunt Eudora," she said, rattling the family skeleton all unknowingly. "You oughtn't to make him nervous. My aunt Eudora was and she cried all the time and now she's shut up somewheres because she has some kind of melon colic. Chetwynd was scared when Genevieve Gertrude choked, and he's got those leggins on *yet*."

Peter scratched his head. Then his eyes began to dance.

"I'll tell you," he crowed. "Now we can project *good*. Genevieve Gertrude, you immertate Chetwynd Jones's mother. The book agent missed *her*, you know. Yes, you can! If you're any kind of a sport, you can. Take him out in the hall and come in like she done yesterday. He's got them leggins on just like a play. Here's her glasses. Teacher got mine but she didn't get Rick's."

Again Genevieve Gertrude hesitated and again she yielded. . . . A good sport. The front of her middy blouse was soaking wet, her lips were reddened from the peroxide, but—a *good* sport.

She bore down upon the unprotesting Chetwynd and plucked him from his seat. A moment later she spoke from the hall door. She had Mrs. Bayard Livingston Jones's voice, her air. She *was* Mrs. Bayard Livingston Jones.

"Good morning, *dear* Miss Hewitt. I'm a-bringing my little boy to be in your room. Imagine it! Ain't you *glad?* Let me open my coat so you can see the 'spensive lining. It's *real* silk. Now look at my cunning little feet. They're only two and a half. Imagine it! Don't you wisht *you* had a nawful little foot like mine? Then maybe you could catch a husband and not have to be a old maid teacher forevernever."

The elegant Mrs. Jones sat down on a chair and languidly lifted her glasses. She surveyed the room, Chetwynd standing passively at her side.

"Who's that freckly boy in the back seat?" she demanded, waving the glasses. "And that red-head girl? *They* look tough. Are you *sure* everybody else is all right? I simply will not let Chetwynd contamernate with common children. Chetwynd, use your handkerchuff! Are you looking at my bracerlets, Miss Hewitt? They're very han'some—cost *ten* dollars or more. Imagine it! Now if you're *sure* Chetwynd won't get hurt I'll leave him with you. He's never in his little life heard no bad language—"

Mrs. Jones stopped short, her shamed glance on the fateful

brown bottle on Miss Hewitt's desk, but Chetwynd Jones suddenly opened his eyes very wide, also his lips, and burst into literature.

"Have so," he bellowed. "Have so! When the postman brings the bills, my father says, 'God! Ain't a man a dev'lish fool to get married?' "

There was a frightful crash from the front of the room. The book agent picked himself up from the ruins of a chair which had but one leg left and rubbed his elbow.

A faint giggle started, then stopped. Peter turned accusing eyes upon Mrs. Bayard Livingston Jones.

"What's Miss Hewitt always tole you?" he demanded. "*You* showed him to a seat. Ain't Miss Hewitt always and forever said to give company the *best* chair—not the mended one?"

"I did," retorted Mrs. Jones with heat. "Sweet mama! If he ain't learned to set up in a chair yet, what *has* he learned? Now both of the chairs'll be mended and Miss Hewitt—"

The door opened. Mr. Cornish came just inside, bowed to the book agent and then beckoned.

Mr. Kent was still rubbing his elbow, but he turned around when he reached the door and smiled at Grade 5.

"Tell your teacher," he said, "that the project method is a great success in her room. I don't know when I've spent a more profitable half hour. Genevieve Gertrude, those red curls will gleam behind the foot-lights some day. May I be there to see!" He closed the door. Peter sat down. He sighed. Genevieve Gertrude sighed. Grade 5 sighed.

"Projectin' is hard work," said Peter, with a sapience beyond his nine years. "Just *one* does all the plannin' and if it goes good, the *crowd* gets all the credit. If it goes rotten, *he* gets all the blame. It ain't *fair!*"

Grade 5 sighed again, and looked through the windows at the fairy maple tree all decked in rainbow gems. And then the door opened the second time, and in came Miss Hewitt!

Her face was all pinky, and there was a curl in front of her ear. Genevieve Gertrude's heart was suddenly heavy. Oh, dear! That nice, baldy, young man what was a editor would take Miss Hewitt away for good some day. Every time she looked pretty like that made the some day nearer. She had been seeing him again. Genevieve Gertrude knew that before her teacher spoke.

"Well, boys and girls, I'm the tardy one *this* time, but I met

Mr. Cornish in the hall, so it's all right. If I hadn't caught a ride with a—friend—I don't know *what* time I could have gotten here. Mr. Cornish tells me you've been splendid children—took beautiful care of yourselves, and entertained company besides."

She had taken off her hat and coat, tossed them on her desk, and was rubbing her hands.

"What did you do, people?" she asked cheerfully. "I heard fine reports, and I have a bit of news for you, too. Miss Bronson is to be transferred to the Junior High, and we are to have a *new* drawing teacher."

Not a gleam of interest lighted the faces of Grade 5. Their teacher looked puzzled.

"What did you do?" she repeated. "Peter, you were in charge. Did you have the class say 'If' for Mr. Kent? I'm so proud of the expression you put into that beautiful poem."

Peter looked at the ceiling.

"No, Miss Hewitt, we didn't say no pome. I—I sang my song for the man. The one my uncle learned me."

Miss Hewitt sat down suddenly. Her lips opened, closed, opened again.

"You sang—*that* song?"

Peter nodded.

"I'm sorry. It's not *quite* a school song, Peter. And then what? Perhaps you sang, 'America, the Beautiful'."

Peter fingered his chin.

"I—I read my story next."

Miss Hewitt shut her eyes.

"You—read your story?"

"He liked it! And he liked my song, too. He said it was funny. Genevieve Gertrude ast him did he mean funny peculiar or funny ha-ha, and he *meant* funny ha-ha," said Peter, getting pretty red.

It seemed to Genevieve Gertrude that her teacher moaned, but of course this could not be so. Growed-up people did not moan 'less'n they had a pain somewheres. She raised her hand.

"And then I immertated Miss Bronson for the man, and he wrote a lot in his book," she volunteered.

Grade 5's eyes shifted from their teacher's face to the brown bottle but no one added to Genevieve Gertrude's remark. They were not tattle-tales.

All the pink had gone from Miss Hewitt's cheeks. She got out her glasses and put them on.

"Miss Bronson! Oh, my heavens above!"

She closed her eyes again and fanned herself with a paper.

"Tell me the rest," she said quickly. "All of it. Did you say, 'A Bunch of Golden Keys Is Mine' or show him rapid work in arithmetic? You didn't do any school work *at all?*"

"Well," Peter's tone was injured, "*you* said to project and we *did*. Last of all Genevieve Gertrude immertated Chetwynd Jones's mother, and the chair broke with him. He couldn't seem to set still."

Miss Hewitt put her head down on her coat. The wind had blown loose curls upon her neck. She looked almost like a little girl that way, and Genevieve Gertrude wanted to hug her hard.

"I didn't immertate Mrs. Jones so *very* long," she comforted; "only till Chetwynd said—"

Peter gave her a warning glance. He turned his eyes on the puffy Chetwynd, drooping in his seat, and winked meaningly at the class.

"Don't you worry none 'bout Mrs. Jones," he said mysteriously. "*We* can tell *her* something. When Windy opens his mouth, he sure says a plenty! And don't you care none 'bout that book agent. He was a funny peculiar book agent anyhow."

Miss Hewitt raised her head, and Genevieve Gertrude shivered at the expression in her teacher's eyes. She looked *awful* queer—kinda scared and solumn!

"He wasn't a book agent," Miss Hewitt said slowly. "He was the *state inspector.*"

Genevieve Gertrude broke the stunned silence.

"Well, I thought *all* the time he didn't act like them fresh things what you got to get your foot in the door first for," she said.

A DAY OFF[1]

By ALICE BROWN

ABIGAIL BENNET stood by the kitchen table, her mixing-bowl before her. She hummed a little under her breath, as she paused, considering what to make. There were eggs on the table, in a round comfortable basket that had held successions of eggs for twenty years. There were flour and sugar in their respective boxes, and some butter in a plate. It was an April day, and Abigail's eyes wandered to the kitchen window at the sound of a bird-call from the elm. A smile lighted her worn face. The winter had been a hard one, and now it was over and gone. This, also, was a moment's peace in the midst of the day. Her husband was comfortably napping in the front room. He had broken his arm in midwinter, and that had temporarily disarranged the habit of his life. Abigail had not owned it, even to her most secret self, but she was tired of his innocent supervision of indoor affairs, the natural product of his idleness. Jonathan was a born meddler. He interfered for the general good, and usually it did no harm; for he was accustomed, in his best estate, to give minute orders at home, and then hurry away to the hayfield or his fencing. Abigail scrupulously obeyed, but it was without the irritating consciousness of personal supervision. Now it was different.

As she felt the stillness of the day, and the warmth of the soft spring air blowing in at the window, she pushed back the bowl against her measuring-cup and made a little clink. Instantly, as if the sound had evoked it, a voice sprang from the sitting-room. Jonathan was awake.

"Nabby," he called, "what you doin'?"

Abigail stood arrested for a moment, like a wood creature startled on its way.

"My land!" she said, beneath her breath. Then she answered cheerfully, "I'm goin' to stir up a mite o' cake."

"What kind?"

"Oh, I dunno'. One-two-three-four, mebbe."

---

[1] From *The County Road,* by Alice Brown; copyright, 1906, by Houghton Mifflin Company. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

"Where's that dried-apple pie we had yesterday?" inquired Jonathan, with the zest she knew. "Ain't there enough for supper?"

"I dunno' but there is."

"Then what you makin' cake for?"

"I dunno'. I thought mebbe we'd better have suthin' on hand."

"How many eggs is there in one-two-three-four?"

"Why, there's two, when ye make half the receipt." Abigail's tone was uniformly hearty and full of a zealous interest; but she shifted from one foot to the other, and made faces at the wall.

"Ain't there any kind o' cake you can stir up with one egg?"

"Why, there's cup cake; but it's terrible poor pickin', seems to me."

Jonathan rose and took his way to the kitchen. He appeared on the sill, tall and lank, his shrewd, bright-eyed face diversified by the long lines that creased the cheeks. Abigail stopped grimacing, and greeted him with woman's specious smile.

"Don't ye do it to-day," said Jonathan, not unkindly, but with the tone of an impeccable adviser. "You have the apple pie to-day, an' to-morrer you can stir up a cup cake. Eggs are scurse yit, an' they will be till the spring gits along a mite."

"Well," answered Abigail obediently.

She began setting away her cooking materials, and Jonathan, after smoothing his hair at the kitchen glass, put on his hat and went out. Presently she saw him, one foot on the stone wall, talking with a neighbor who had stopped his jogging horse on the way to market. There was a flurry of skirts on the stairs, and Claribel ran down, dressed in her blue cashmere, her girdle in her hand. She had a wholesome, edible prettiness, all rounded contours and rich bloom.

"Here, mother," she called, and thrust the girdle at her. "This thing hooks behind. It's awful tight. You see if you can do it."

"You wait a minute," said Abigail. "I'll wash the flour off my hands." She went to the kitchen sink, and afterwards, standing at the roller-towel, she regarded Claribel with a fond delight that always amused the girl when she could stop to note it. Claribel had told her mother, before this, that she acted as if girls were worth a thousand dollars apiece. "My!" said Abigail, pulling discreetly at the hooks, "it is tight, ain't it? I'm afraid you'll feel all girted up."

"I'll hold my breath." She held it until her cheeks were bursting with bloom, and the girdle came together.

Abigail put up a tendril of hair in the girl's neck and smoothed a bit of lace.

"Now you hurry off," she said. "If I's you, I'd put on my things an' slip out the side door, whilst father's out there talkin'."

Claribel was pinning on her hat at the glass. "What's the matter of father?" she asked.

"Oh, nothin'! only he's got one o' his terrible times—an' nobody to it, to-day. If he sees you're goin' anywheres, like's not he'll set to an' plan it different."

"Well, he need n't," said Claribel. "I've got to have some Hamburg an' some number sixty cotton. I'll be back by noon."

"You don't want I should call out to Ebenezer an' ask him for a ride?" inquired her mother, at the window, a doubtful eye on the farmer still gossiping without.

"Now, mother!" Claribel laughed. "You know well enough what I'm goin' to do. I'm goin' to walk, an' Ballard'll overtake me when he goes to get the mail. It's about time now."

"Well," said her mother, and she left the window and came to hold Claribel's jacket. "My soul!" she said despairingly. "There's your father now."

Jonathan's step was at the door. It was brisker than when it bore him forth. His face had lighted in new interest.

"Where you goin'?" he asked Claribel at once.

She was walking past him to the door.

"Oh, just up to the Corners," she answered casually. "I've got to have some things."

"You wait a spell," said Jonathan. He glanced into the glass, and decided he need not shave. "I'm goin' up along to git some onion-seed. Ebenezer says old Lang's got some, fust quality, an' if we don't look out it'll all be gone."

"O father!" cried Abigail involuntarily.

"You come out an' help me git the bits in," said Jonathan to his wife. "I can manage the rest with one hand."

Claribel followed them hesitatingly out through the shed.

"Father," she began; but Jonathan never turned. "Father!"

"Well, what is it?" he called over his shoulder, and her mother dropped behind and walked with her.

"Don't you take on," urged Abigail. There were tears in her own eyes, and the warm air on her forehead made her think of

youth as well as spring. "You know he can't drive very well, on'y one hand so. Don't you mind."

Claribel's tears also had sprung, and two big crystal globes ran out and splashed her cheeks.

"It was a kind of an agreement," she said passionately. "Ballard's got two watches picked out at Ferris's, and he wants me to see which one I like best. He'll be awful mad, and I shan't blame him."

"Father," called Abigail. "Father!" She ran on into the barn where he had the horse standing while he gave him an impatient one-handed brushing with a bundle of hay. "Father, Claribel's made a kind of an agreement to go with Ballard. You wait a minute whilst I slip on my t'other dress, an' I'll go with ye."

"Here, you git in them bits," said Jonathan. "God sake! Don't you hender me when that onion-seed's goin' by the board. They'll be married in four weeks, won't they? Well, I guess Claribel can stan' it if she don't see him for twenty-four hours."

Abigail got the bits in, and went on deftly harnessing. She spoke but once. That was when Claribel came and began to fasten a trace.

"Go 'way, dear," said the mother, in an eloquent tenderness. "You'll git horse-hairs all over you."

Then Claribel stepped silently into the wagon; her father followed her, and they drove away.

It was three o'clock in the afternoon when they came home. Jonathan was in high spirits. He had got his onion-seed; and then, having heard of an auction, five miles farther on, where there was a cultivator as good as new, he had bought some crackers and cheese at the grocery and driven there. He and Claribel had eaten their lunch in the wagon, and then Claribel had sat drearily by while her father bid and reft bargains away from other bidders. Now Claribel was heavy-eyed, and her mouth looked pitiful. She ate sparingly of the early supper her mother set out for them, and then, after washing the dishes, sat awhile by the window in the dusk. Her mother knew she was watching; but Ballard did not come, and at nine o'clock the girl walked droopingly off to bed.

Abigail was late in going to sleep that night. She lay looking into the darkness, tears sometimes gathering in her eyes and then softly wiped away on a corner of the sheet. It was not that she failed to bear a little disappointment for Claribel; but, to her

mind, youth was youth. There were times when one wanted things, and if they had to be put off, they were not the same. One bud could never open twice.

When breakfast was over, Jonathan settled himself in the sitting-room with the county paper, and Claribel slipped into the pantry and beckoned her mother. The girl spoke shyly:

"I don't know but I'll run over to Ballard's and ask his mother for that skirt pattern."

"So do," said Abigail, with understanding.

"You see"—Claribel went on. She bent her head, and the corners of her mouth trembled. "I don't want you should think I'm foolish; but yesterday was a kind of a particular day with us. 'Twas a year ago yesterday we were engaged, and it was kind of understood we were going to look at the watch together. The reason I told Ballard I'd walk along and let him overtake me—well, I didn't dare to have him come here, for fear father'd spoil it somehow. And then he saw me drive by with father, and not a word to say why, and father was in a hurry and wouldn't let me stop—and if I was in Ballard's place I should be mad as fire."

"You go right over," responded Abigail, something throbbing in her voice. "Slip out the porch door, and clip it right along."

Again Abigail stood at the table, her mixing-bowl before her, and at the clink of her spoon Jonathan's voice came promptly from the other room:

"Nabby, what you doin' of?"

This time her muttered exclamation had the fierceness of accumulated wrongs, but she added cheerfully:

"I'm mixin' up a mite o' cake."

"What kind?"

For an instant Abigail compressed her lips, and then she added, desperately, as one whose resolve had hardened:

"Cup cake."

"How many eggs?"

"One." At the instant of speaking, she took two eggs from the basket and, one in either hand, broke them at the same instant upon the edge of the bowl. Jonathan's ears were keen, but they did not serve him against the testimony of that one innocent crack. Abigail beat them hastily, and pouring them into her butter and sugar, breathed again.

"You call Claribel. I want her to help me a mite down sullar," said Jonathan, on his way to the kitchen.

Abigail, at his step, crumpled one eggshell in her hand and hastily thrust it into the coals. She laid a light stick over it.

"I want to have her sprout some o' them 'taters in the arch."

"She can't do it this forenoon," said his wife glibly. "She's gone out."

"Where?"

"Down to Mis' Towle's. I sent her to carry back that peck measure you borrered last week."

A strange exhilaration possessed her. Abigail did not remember to have lied willfully in all her life before. Her difficult way had been, against all temptation, to tell the bare truth and suffer for it; but now that she had begun to lie, she liked it. She looked at her husband, as he stood in the doorway gazing innocently over her head at the window where the spring made a misty picture, and wondered what he would say if he guessed what was in her heart. She hardly thought herself, save that it was something new and wild: the resolve to say anything that came into her head, and take the consequences. Jonathan was pondering.

"Why," said he slowly, at last, "seems to me I carried back that peck measure myself, day or two ago."

Now Abigail remembered seeing him walk out of the yard with it in his hand; but she did not flinch.

"Oh, no, you didn't! Claribel's just took it."

There was another pause, and Jonathan spoke again.

"Claribel asked me for some money t'other day. Said she wanted to git two more gowns. You think she needs 'em?"

"I know she does," returned Abigail vigorously. "You don't want she should walk out o' this house without a stitch to her back, do ye, an' have Bullard set to an' clothe her?"

"You gi'n her any money this winter?"

Abigail remembered her hard-won store of butter-and-eggs money, put aside from the moment Ballard had begun his courting, and she remembered the day when she and Claribel had stolen off to the Corners to spend the precious store in fine cloth and trimming. But she looked her husband straight in the eye.

"Not a cent," she answered, and liked the sound of it.

"Well," concluded Jonathan, "I'll hand her some to-morrer. I'll make it what you think's best."

For a moment her heart softened, but Jonathan spoke again:

"You ain't a-goin' to make weddin' cake, be ye?"

The strange part of her new communion with him was that, as

her tongue formed the lie, her mind flashed a picture of the truth before her. Now she had a swift vision of the day when he had gone to town meeting, and she and Claribel had baked the wedding cake, in furious haste, and set it away to mellow.

"No," said she calmly; "I ain't a-goin' to make no cake. I got a little on hand."

"When'd ye have it?"

"Oh, I dunno'! I got a loaf or two."

"Well," Jonathan ruminated, "I dunno's I remember your bakin' any."

"I didn't bake it. 'Twas some Aunt Lucretia left in her crock when she moved out West." She thought with wonder of the ease with which new worlds could be created merely by the tongue. It gave her a sense of lightness and freedom. She could almost forgive Jonathan for meddling, since he had introduced her to these brilliant possibilities.

"That's terrible yeller for one egg," he commented, as she poured her cake into the pan.

"It had two yolks," said Abigail calmly. She felt an easy mastery of him. Then she closed the oven door, cleared off her cooking table, and sat down to sew.

This was one of the days when Jonathan seemed possessed by the spirit of discovery. He took up a bit of edging from the window-sill, and held it in a clumsy hand.

"How much do ye pay for that trade?" he inquired.

"Two cents," responded Abigail.

"Two cents! That's more'n two cents a yard!"

"No. It's a cent an' a half a yard an' five yards for two cents. We got five."

"I never heerd o' such carryin's on." Jonathan spoke helplessly. "They can't do business that way."

"They do." She spoke conclusively.

He took up another wider remnant. This was a coarse lace.

"How much d'ye pay for that?" he asked.

"Nothin'," said Abigail. "I made it."

Jonathan ruminated. He felt exceedingly puzzled. It was not that he distrusted her. No moment of their life together had failed to convince him that she was honest as the day.

"I dunno's I ever see you doin' anything like that," he commented. "How'd ye do it? Looks as if 'twas wove."

"I done it on pins," said Abigail wildly.

"Common pins?"

"No. Clo'es-pins."

Jonathan frowned and gazed at her, still reflecting.

"Mebbe you could make some to sell," he ventured. "Looks as if there might be some profit in't."

"I don't want no profit," returned his wife, unmoved, and Jonathan presently went out to the barn, ruminating by the way.

Then when his step had ceased on the shed floor, Abigail laid down her sewing. She looked briefly up to heaven, as if she interrogated the bolt that was presently to stun her; but the bolt did not fall, and she began to laugh. She laughed until the tears came, and her face, suffused with mirth, looked a dozen years to the good. She dried her eyes, but without wiping away any of that new emotion. She could not yet blame herself for anything so rare.

The noon dinner was on the table, and Claribel had not come. Her mother had set forth a goodly meal, and she talked cheerfully through it. But Jonathan was never to be quite distracted.

"Where's Claribel?" he asked, with his second piece of pie.

"She ain't comin'," answered her mother, at random. "I'll set suthin' out on the pantry-shelf, an' she can have it when she wants."

Jonathan paused, with a choice morsel on the way to his mouth.

"You don't s'pose she's fetched up at Ballard's an' stayed there to dinner, do ye?" he asked.

"Well, what if she has?"

"Nothin', only I wanted to know. I'd step over there arter dinner an' fetch her."

Abigail laid down her fork. She spoke with the desperation of one already lost.

"Now, father, I'll tell ye plainly, I ain't goin' to have Claribel disturbed. She's up-chamber, layin' down with a sick headache, an' I've turned the key in the door."

"Well, ye needn't ha' done that," Jonathan wondered. "She might as well sleep it off."

"I'll sprout the 'taters," she asserted vigorously, "but I ain't a-goin' to have her round with a headache an' git all beat out so she don't do a stitch o' work to-morrer."

Jonathan said nothing, and after dinner she sped upstairs, locked the door of Claribel's room, and put the key in her pocket. Then, with a mind at ease, she washed her dinner dishes and

went down cellar. There she sprouted potatoes with a swift dexterity and a joyous heart. Claribel was abroad somewhere, she knew, roaming the free world. That was enough.

At five Jonathan finished his nap, and came heavily to the door above.

"Here, you," he called. "I've be'n up-chamber to find out how Claribel is. The door's locked an' there ain't no key inside. You got the key?"

Abigail rose and dusted the dirt from her hands. Her task was done.

"No," said she. "I ain't got no key."

"I thought you said you locked the door. Didn't you take the key?"

Abigail was mounting the cellar stairs. She faced him calmly.

"No, I never said any such thing," she returned, with an easy grace. "Clary's locked it, I s'pose. If she don't answer, she's asleep. You let her be, Jonathan. It's no way to go routin' anybody out when they've got a headache."

"Well," said Jonathan, and grumbled off to the barn.

Abigail felt more and more under the spell of her new system. It swept her like a mounting flood. She had lied all day. It was easy and she liked it. With a mirthful feeling that some compensation was due Jonathan, she made cream-of-tartar biscuits and opened quince preserves. The one-two-three-four cake was golden within and sweetly brown on top; it had not suffered from the artifice that went to the making of it.

The door opened and Claribel came in. She had her jacket on her arm, and her cheeks were all crimson bloom. A fine gold chain was about her neck, and immediately she drew a watch from her belt and opened it, with a child's delight.

"Look, mother, look!" she cried. The words followed one another in a rapid stream. "He wa'n't mad a mite. He said he knew 'twas something I couldn't help. And we went and got it, and had dinner at the hotel. I guess I shan't ever forget this day long's I live."

Abigail was holding the watch, spellbound over its beauty. But at that she broke into a laugh, wild and mirthless.

"No," said she, "no. I guess I shan't either."

"Mother, what you mean?" The girl was answering in a quick alarm. "Anything happened to you?"

Abigail quieted at once.

"No, dear, no," she said. "I've had a real nice day. On'y I've kinder worried for fear you wouldn't see Ballard, an' all. Now you take off your things, an' father'll be in, an' we'll have supper."

But when they were sitting at the table, Jonathan kept glancing at Claribel, her red cheeks and brilliant eyes.

"Ain't you kinder feverish?" he asked, and Abigail answered:

"See here, father. Ballard's give her a watch. Ain't that handsome?"

Jonathan turned it over and over in his hand.

"I guess it cost him suthin'," he remarked. "Well, to-morrer we'll see if we can't git together a little suthin' more for clo'es."

Claribel went to bed early, to dream, with her watch under her pillow, and the husband and wife sat together by the fire below. When the clock struck nine, they rose, in lingering unison, and made ready to go upstairs. Abigail cleared her sewing from the table, and Jonathan shut the stove dampers and wound the clock.

"They've got that feller over to the Corners," he announced, as he waited for her to set back the chairs.

"What feller?"

"The one that stole Si Merrill's team. They clapped him into jail, an' I guess there'll be consid'able of a time over it. He hadn't a word to say."

Abigail was standing before him, her hands clasped under her apron, as if they were cold. Her face looked tired and pale. She spoke with a passionate insistence.

"Jonathan, I've found out suthin'. It don't do to do the leastest thing that's wrong."

"Why, no," Jonathan acquiesced, getting a newspaper and laying it before the hearth for the morning's kindling. "Anybody's likely to git took up for it."

"It ain't that," said Abigail. Her small face had grown tense from the extremity of terrible knowledge. "You might go along quite a spell an' not git found out. It's because"— She halted a moment, and her voice dropped a note—"it's because wrong-doin's so pleasant."

"You take the lamp," said Jonathan. Then he remembered that the argument should be clinched, and added, with his Sunday manner:

"The way o' the transgressor is hard."

"It ain't," asserted Abigail, at the stairs. "It's elegant. It's enough to scare ye to death, ye have such a good time in it, an'

ye go so fast. It's like slidin' down hill an' the wind at your back. Mebbe the feller that stole Si's team grabbed an apple off'n a tree once an' that started him. I don't blame him. I don't blame nobody."

Jonathan was beginning the ascent, and she paused and looked back at the kitchen, as if there were the inanimate witnesses of her perfidy.

"I've had a splendid day," she said aloud. "I've had the best time I've had for years. I ain't ever goin' to have another like it. I don't dast to. 'Twouldn't take much to land me in jail. But I ain't sorry, an' I ain't a-goin' to say I be."

"What you doin' of down there?" called Jonathan. "Who you talkin' to?"

"I'm comin'," said Abigail. "I'll bring the light."

ZENOBIA'S INFIDELITY[1]

By H. C. BUNNER

DR. TIBBITT stood on the porch of Mrs. Pennypepper's boarding-house and looked up and down the deserted Main Street of Sagawaug with a contented smile, the while he buttoned his driving-gloves. The little doctor had good cause to be content with himself and with everything else—with his growing practice, with his comfortable boarding-house, with his own good looks, with his neat attire, and with the world in general. He could not but be content with Sagawaug, for there never was a prettier country town. The Doctor looked across the street and picked out the very house that he proposed to buy when the one remaining desire of his soul was gratified. It was a house with a hip-roof and with a long garden running down to the river.

There was no one in the house to-day, but there was no one in any of the houses. Not even a pair of round bare arms was visible among the clothes that waved in the August breeze in every back-yard. It was Circus Day in Sagawaug.

The Doctor was climbing into his gig when a yell startled him. A freckled boy with saucer eyes dashed around the corner.

"Doctor!" he gasped, "come quick! The circus got a-fire an' the trick elephant's most roasted!"

"Don't be silly, Johnny," said the Doctor, reprovingly.

"Hope to die—Honest Injun—cross my breast!" said the boy. The Doctor knew the sacredness of this juvenile oath.

"Get in here with me," he said, "and if I find you're trying to be funny, I'll drop you in the river."

As they drove toward the outskirts of the town, Johnny told his tale.

"Now," he began, "the folks was all out of the tent after the show was over, and one of the circus men, he went to the oil-barrel in the green wagon with Dan'l in the Lion's Den onto the outside of it, an' he took in a candle an' left it there, and fust thing the barrel busted, an' he wasn't hurted a bit, but the trick elephant

[1] From *Short Sixes*, by H. C. Bunner; copyright, 1891, by Charles Scribner's Sons. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

she was burned awful, an' the ring-tailed baboon, he was so scared he had a fit. Say, did you know baboons had fits?"

When they reached the circus-grounds, they found a crowd around a small side-show tent. A strong odor of burnt leather confirmed Johnny's story. Dr. Tibbitt pushed his way through the throng, and gazed upon the huge beast, lying on her side on the grass, her broad shoulder charred and quivering. Her bulk expanded and contracted with spasms of agony, and from time to time she uttered a moaning sound. On her head was a structure of red cloth, about the size of a bushel-basket, apparently intended to look like a British soldier's forage-cap. This was secured by a strap that went under her chin—if an elephant has a chin. This scarlet cheesebox every now and then slipped down over her eye, and the faithful animal patiently, in all her anguish, adjusted it with her prehensile trunk.

By her side stood her keeper and the proprietor of the show, a large man with a dyed moustache, a wrinkled face, and hair oiled and frizzed. These two bewailed their loss alternately.

"The boss elephant in the business!" cried the showman. "Barnum never had no trick elephant like Zenobia. And them lynes and Dan'l was painted in new before I took the road this season. Oh, there's been a hoodoo on me since I showed ag'inst the Sunday-school picnic!"

"That there elephant's been like my own child," groaned the keeper, "or my own wife, I may say. I've slep' alongside of her every night for fourteen damn years."

The Doctor had been carefully examining his patient.

"If there is any analogy—" he began.

"Neuralogy!" snorted the indignant showman; " 'tain't neuralogy, you jay pill-box, she's *cooked!*"

"If there is any analogy," repeated Dr. Tibbitt, flushing a little, "between her case and that of a human being, I think I can save your elephant. Get me a barrel of linseed oil, and drive these people away."

The Doctor's orders were obeyed with eager submission. He took off his coat, and went to work. He had never doctored an elephant, and the job interested him. At the end of an hour, Zenobia's sufferings were somewhat alleviated. She lay on her side, chained tightly to the ground, and swaddled in bandages. Her groans had ceased.

"I'll call to-morrow at noon," said the Doctor—"good gra-

cious, what's that?" Zenobia's trunk was playing around his waistband.

"She wants to shake hands with you," her keeper explained. "She's a lady, she is, and she knows you done her good."

"I'd rather not have anything of the sort," said the Doctor, decisively.

When Dr. Tibbitt called at twelve on the morrow, he found Zenobia's tent neatly roped in, an amphitheatre of circus-benches constructed around her, and this amphitheatre packed with people.

"Got a quarter apiece from them jays," whispered the showman, "jest to see you dress them wounds." Subsequently the showman relieved his mind to a casual acquaintance. "He's got a heart like a gun-flint, that doctor," he said; "made me turn out every one of them jays and give 'em their money back before he'd lay a hand to Zenobia."

But if the Doctor suppressed the clinic, neither he nor the showman suffered. From dawn till dusk people came from miles around to stare a quarter's worth at the burnt elephant. Once in a while, as a rare treat, the keeper lifted a corner of her bandages, and revealed the seared flesh. The show went off in a day or two, leaving Zenobia to recover at leisure; and as it wandered westward, it did an increased business simply because it had had a burnt trick elephant. Such, dear friends, is the human kind.

The Doctor fared even better. The fame of his new case spread far and wide. People seemed to think that if he could cure an elephant he could cure anything. He was called into consultation in neighboring towns. Women in robust health imagined ailments, so as to send for him and ask him shuddering questions about "that *wretched* animal." The trustees of the orphan-asylum made him staff-physician—in his case the Doctor thought he could trace a connection of ideas, in which children and a circus were naturally associated. And the local newspaper called him a *savant*.

He called every day upon Zenobia, who greeted him with trumpetings of joyful welcome. She also desired to shake hands with him, and her keeper had to sit on her head and hold her trunk to repress the familiarity. In two weeks she was cured, except for extensive and permanent scars, and she waited only for a favorable opportunity to rejoin the circus.

The Doctor had got his fee in advance.

* * *

Upon a sunny afternoon in the last of August, Dr. Tibbitt jogged slowly toward Sagawaug in his neat little gig. He had been to Pelion, the next town, to call upon Miss Minetta Bunker, the young lady whom he desired to install in the house with the garden running down to the river. He had found her starting out for a drive in Tom Matson's dog-cart. Now, the Doctor feared no foe, in medicine or in love; but when a young woman is inscrutable as to the state of her affections, when the richest young man in the county is devoting himself to her, and when the young lady's mother is backing the rich man, a young country doctor may as well feel perplexed and anxious over his chance of the prize.

The Doctor was so troubled, indeed, that he paid no heed to a heavy, repeated thud behind him on the macadamized road. His gentle little mare heard it, though, and began to curvet and prance. The Doctor was pulling her in, and calming her with a "Soo—Soo—down, girl, down!" when he interrupted himself to shout:

"Great Cæsar! get off me!"

Something like a yard of rubber hose had come in through the side of the buggy, and was rubbing itself against his face. He looked around, and the cold sweat stood out on him as he saw Zenobia, her chain dragging from her hind foot, her red cap a-cock on her head, trotting along by the side of his vehicle, snorting with joy, and evidently bent on lavishing her pliant, serpentine, but leathery, caresses upon his person.

His fear vanished in a moment. The animal's intentions were certainly pacific, to put it mildly. He reflected that if he could keep his horse ahead of her, he could toll her around the block and back toward her tent. He had hardly guessed, as yet, the depth of the impression which he had made upon Zenobia's heart, which must have been a large organ, if the size of her ears was any indication—according to the popular theory.

He was on the very edge of the town, and his road took him by a house where he had a new and highly valued patient, the young wife of old Deacon Burgee. Her malady being of a nature that permitted it, Mrs. Burgee was in the habit of sitting at her window when the Doctor made his rounds, and indicating the satisfactory state of her health by a bow and a smile. On this occasion she fled from the window with a shriek. Her mother,

a formidable old lady under a red false-front, came to the window, shrieked likewise, and slammed down the sash.

The Doctor tolled his elephant around the block without further misadventure and they started up the road toward Zenobia's tent, Zenobia caressing her benefactor while shudders of antipathy ran over his frame. In a few minutes the keeper hove in sight. Zenobia saw him first, blew a shrill blast on her trumpet, close to the Doctor's ear, bolted through a snake-fence, lumbered across a turnip-field, and disappeared in a patch of woods, leaving the Doctor to quiet his excited horse and to face the keeper, who advanced with rage in his eye.

"What do you mean, you cuss," he began, "weaning a man's elephant's affections away from him? You ain't got no more morals than a Turk, you ain't. That elephant an' me has been side-partners for fourteen years, an' here you come between us."

"I don't want your confounded elephant," roared the Doctor; "why don't you keep it chained up?"

"She busted her chain to git after you," replied the keeper. "Oh, I seen you two lally-gaggin' all along the road. I knowed you wa'n't no good the first time I set eyes on yer, a-sayin' hoodoo words over the poor dumb beast."

The Doctor resolved to banish "analogy" from his vocabulary.

* * *

The next morning, about four o'clock, Dr. Tibbitt awoke with a troubled mind. He had driven home after midnight from a late call, and he had had an uneasy fancy that he saw a great shadowy bulk ambling along in the mist-hid fields by the roadside. He jumped out of bed and went to the window. Below him, completely covering Mrs. Pennypepper's nasturtium bed, her prehensile trunk ravaging the early chrysanthemums, stood Zenobia, swaying to and fro, the dew glistening on her seamed sides beneath the early morning sunlight. The Doctor hastily dressed himself and slipped downstairs and out, to meet this Frankenstein's monster of affection.

There was but one thing to do. Zenobia would follow him wherever he went—she rushed madly through Mrs. Pennypepper's roses to greet him—and his only course was to lead her out of the town before people began to get up, and to detain her in some remote meadow until he could get her keeper to come for her and secure her by force or stratagem. He set off by the least fre-

quented streets, and he experienced a pang of horror as he remembered that his way led him past the house of his one professional rival in Sagawaug. Suppose Dr. Pettengill should be coming home or going out as he passed!

He did not meet Dr. Pettengill. He did meet Deacon Burgee, who stared at him with more of rage than of amazement in his wrinkled countenance. The Deacon was carrying a large bundle of embroidered linen and flannel that must have been tied up in a hurry.

"Good morning, Deacon," the Doctor hailed him, with as much ease of manner as he could assume. "How's Mrs. Burgee?"

"She's doin' fust rate, no thanks to no circus doctors!" snorted the Deacon. "An' if you want to know anything further concernin' her health, you ask Dr. Pettengill. *He's* got more sense than to go trailin' around the streets with a parboiled elephant behind him, a-frightening women-folks a hull month afore the'r time."

"Why, Deacon!" cried the Doctor, "what—what is it?"

"It's a boy," responded the Deacon sternly; "and it's God's own mercy that 'twa'n't born with a trunk and a tail."

* * *

The Doctor found a secluded pasture, near the woods that encircled the town, and there he sat him down, in the corner of a snake-fence, to wait until some farmer or market-gardener should pass by, to carry his message to the keeper. He had another message to send, too. He had several cases that must be attended to at once. Unless he could get away from his pachydermatous familiar, Pettengill must care for his cases that morning. It was hard—but what was he to do?

Zenobia stood by his side, dividing her attention between the caresses she bestowed on him and the care she was obliged to take of her red cap, which was not tightly strapped on, and slipped in various directions at every movement of her gigantic head. She was unmistakably happy. From time to time she trumpeted cheerily. She plucked up tufts of grass, and offered them to the Doctor. He refused them, and she ate them herself. Once he took a daisy from her, absentmindedly, and she was so greatly pleased that she smashed his hat in her endeavors to pet him. The Doctor was a kind-hearted man. He had to admit that Zenobia meant well. He patted her trunk, and made matters

worse. Her elephantine ecstasy came near being the death of him.

Still the farmer came not, nor the market-gardener. Dr. Tibbitt began to believe that he had chosen a meadow that was *too* secluded. At last two boys appeared. After they had stared at him and at Zenobia for half an hour, one of them agreed to produce Dr. Pettengill and Zenobia's keeper for fifty cents. Dr. Pettengill was the first to arrive. He refused to come nearer than the furthest limit of the pasture.

"Hello, Doctor," he called out, "hear you've been seeing elephants. Want me to take your cases? Guess I can. Got a half-hour free. Brought some bromide down for you, if you'd like to try it."

To judge from his face, Zenobia was invisible. But his presence alarmed that sensitive animal. She crowded up close to the fence, and every time she flicked her skin to shake off the flies she endangered the equilibrium of the Doctor, who was sitting on the top rail, for dignity's sake. He shouted his directions to his colleague, who shouted back professional criticisms.

"Salicylate of soda for that old woman? What's the matter with salicylate of cinchonidia? Don't want to kill her before you get out of this swamp, do you?"

Dr. Tibbitt was not a profane man; but at this moment he could not restrain himself.

"*Damn you!*" he said, with such vigour that the elephant gave a convulsive start. The Doctor felt his seat depart from under him—he was going—going into space for a brief moment, and then he scrambled up out of the soft mud of the cow-wallow back of the fence on which he had been sitting. Zenobia had backed against the fence.

The keeper arrived soon after. He had only reached the meadow when Zenobia lifted her trunk in the air, emitted a mirthful toot, and struck out for the woods with the picturesque and cumbersome gallop of a mastodon pup.

"Dern *you,*" said the keeper to Dr. Tibbitt, who was trying to fasten his collar, which had broken loose in his fall; "if the boys was here, and I hollered 'Hey Rube!'—there wouldn't be enough left of yer to spread a plaster fer a baby's bile!"

The Doctor made himself look as decent as the situation allowed, and then he marched toward the town with the light of a firm resolve illuminating his face. The literature of his childhood

had come to his aid. He remembered the unkind tailor who pricked the elephant's trunk. It seemed to him that the tailor was a rather good fellow.

"If that elephant's disease is gratitude," thought the Doctor, "I'll give her an antidote."

He went to the drug-store, and, as he went, he pulled out a blank pad and wrote down a prescription, from mere force of habit. It read thus:

PESSELS & MORTON,

DRUGGISTS,

Commercial Block, Main Street, Sagawaug.

PRESCRIPTIONS CAREFULLY COMPOUNDED.

℞ Calcium sul ℥ ij
Calcis chl ℥ xvj.
Capsicum pulv ℥ i
M at ft. Bol.
Sig. Take at once.
Tibbitt

When the druggist looked at it, he was taken short of breath.

"What's this?" he asked—"a bomb-shell?"

"Put it up," said the Doctor, "and don't talk so much." He lingered nervously on the druggist's steps, looking up and down the street. He had sent a boy to order the stable-man to harness his gig. By-and-by, the druggist put his head out of the door.

"I've got some asafœtida pills," he said, "that are kind o' tired, and half a pound of whale-oil soap that's higher 'n Haman—"

"Put 'em in!" said the Doctor, grimly, as he saw Zenobia coming in sight far down the street.

She came up while the Doctor was waiting for the bolus. Twenty-three boys were watching them, although it was only seven o'clock in the morning.

"Down, Zenobia!" said the Doctor, thoughtlessly, as he might have addressed a dog. He was talking with the druggist, and Zenobia was patting his ear with her trunk. Zenobia sank to her knees. The Doctor did not notice her. She folded her trunk

about him, lifted him to her back, rose, with a heave and a sway, to her feet, and started up the road. The boys cheered. The Doctor got off on the end of an elm-branch. His descent was watched from nineteen second-story windows.

His gig came to meet him at last, and he entered it and drove rapidly out of town, with Zenobia trotting contentedly behind him. As soon as he had passed Deacon Burgee's house, he drew rein, and Zenobia approached, while his perspiring mare stood on her hind legs.

"Zenobia—pill!" said the Doctor.

As she had often done in her late illness, Zenobia opened her mouth at the word of command, and swallowed the infernal bolus. Then they started up again, and the Doctor headed for Zenobia's tent.

But Zenobia's pace was sluggish. She had been dodging about the woods for two nights, and she was tired. When the Doctor whipped up, she seized the buggy by any convenient projection, and held it back. This damaged the buggy and frightened the horse; but it accomplished Zenobia's end. It was eleven o'clock before Jake Bumgardner's "Half-Way House" loomed up white, afar down the dusty road, and the Doctor knew that his round-about way had at length brought him near to the field where the circus-tent had been pitched.

He drove on with a lighter heart in his bosom. He had not heard Zenobia behind him for some time. He did not know what had become of her, or what she was doing, but he learned later.

The Doctor had compounded a pill well calculated to upset Zenobia's stomach. That it would likewise give her a consuming thirst he had not considered. But chemistry was doing its duty without regard to him. A thirst like a furnace burned within Zenobia. Capsicum and chloride of lime were doing their work. She gasped and groaned. She searched for water. She filled her trunk at a wayside trough and poured the contents into her mouth. Then she sucked up a puddle or two. Then she came to Bumgardner's, where a dozen kegs of lager-beer and a keg of what passed at Bumgardner's for gin stood on the sidewalk. Zenobia's circus experience had taught her what a water-barrel meant. She applied her knowledge. With her fore-foot she deftly staved in the head of one keg after another, and with her trunk she drew up the beer and the gin, and delivered them to her stomach. If you think her taste at fault, remember the bolus.

Bumgardner rushed out and assailed her with a bung-starter. She turned upon him and squirted lager-beer over him until he was covered with an iridescent lather of foam from head to foot. Then she finished the kegs and went on her way, to overtake the Doctor.

* * *

The Doctor was speeding his mare merrily along, grateful for even a momentary relief from Zenobia's attentions, when, at one and the same time, he heard a heavy, uncertain thumping on the road behind him, and the quick patter of a trotter's hoofs on the road ahead of him. He glanced behind him first, and saw Zenobia. She swayed from side to side, more than was her wont. Her red cap was far down over her left eye. Her aspect was rakish, and her gait was unsteady. The Doctor did not know it, but Zenobia was drunk.

Zenobia was sick, but intoxication dominated her sickness. Even sulphide of calcium withdrew courteously before the might of beer and gin. Rocking from side to side, reeling across the road and back, trumpeting in imbecile inexpressive tones, Zenobia advanced.

The Doctor looked forward. Tom Matson sat in his dog-cart, with Miss Bunker by his side. His horse had caught sight of Zenobia, and he was rearing high in air, and whinnying in terror. Before Tom could pull him down, he made a sudden break, overturned the dog-cart, and flung Tom and Miss Minetta Bunker on a bank by the side of the road. It was a soft bank, well-grown with mint and stinging-nettles, just above a creek. Tom had scarce landed before he was up and off, running hard across the fields.

Miss Minetta rose and looked at him with fire in her eyes.

"Well!" she said aloud; "I'd like Mother to see you *now!*"

The Doctor had jumped out of his gig and let his little mare go galloping up the road. He had his arm about Miss Minetta's waist when he turned to face his familiar demon—which may have accounted for the pluck in his face.

But Zenobia was a hundred yards down the road, and she was utterly incapable of getting any further. She trumpeted once or twice, then she wavered like a reed in the wind; her legs weakened under her and she sank on her side. Her red cap had slipped down, and she picked it up with her trunk, broke its band in a

reckless swing that resembled the wave of jovial farewell, gave one titanic hiccup, and fell asleep by the roadside.

* * *

An hour later, Dr. Tibbitt was driving toward Pelion, with Miss Bunker by his side. His horse had been stopped at the toll-gate. He was driving with one hand. Perhaps he needed the other to show how they could have a summer-house in the garden that ran down to the river.

* * *

But it was evening when Zenobia awoke to find her keeper sitting on her head. He jabbed a cotton-hook firmly and decisively into her ear, and led her homeward down the road lit by the golden sunset. That was the end of Zenobia's infidelity.

THE SPIRAL STONE[1]

By ARTHUR COLTON

THE graveyard on the brow of the hill was white with snow. The marbles were white, the evergreens black. One tall spiral stone stood painfully near the center. The little brown church outside the gates turned its face in the more comfortable direction of the village.

Only three were out among the graves: "Ambrose Chillingworth, aetat 30, 1675;" "Margaret Vane, aetat 10, 1839;" and "Thy Little One, O God, aetat 2," from the Mercer Lot. It is called the "Mercer Lot," but the Mercers are all dead or gone from the village.

The Little One trotted around busily, putting his tiny finger in the letterings and patting the faces of the cherubs. The other two sat on the base of the spiral, which twisted in the moonlight over them.

"I wonder why it is?" Margaret said. "Most of them never come out at all. We and the Little One come out so often. You were wise and learned. I knew so little. Will you tell me?"

"Learning is not wisdom," Ambrose answered. "But of this matter it was said that our containment in the grave depended on the spirit in which we departed. I made certain researches. It appeared by common report that only those came out whom desperate sin tormented, or labors incomplete and great desire at the point of death made restless. I had doubts the matter were more subtle, the reasons of it reaching out distantly." He sighed faintly, following with his eyes, tomb by tomb, the broad white path that dropped down the hillside to the church. "I desired greatly to live."

"I, too. Is it because we desired it so much, then? But the Little One—"

"I do not know," he said.

The Little One trotted gravely here and there, seeming to know very well what he was about, and presently came to the spiral

[1] From *Tioba and Other Tales;* copyright, 1903, by Henry Holt and Company. Reprinted by permission of the author.

stone. The lettering on it was new, and there was no cherub. He dropped down suddenly on the snow, with a faint whimper. His small feet came out from under his gown, as he sat upright, gazing at the letters with round, troubled eyes, and up to the top of the monument for the solution of some unstated problem.

"The stone is but newly placed," said Ambrose, "and the newcomer would seem to be of those who rest in peace."

They went and sat down on either side of him, on the snow. The peculiar cutting of the stone, with spirally ascending lines, together with the moon's illusion, gave it a semblance of motion. Something twisted and climbed continually, and vanished continually from the point. But the base was broad, square, and heavily lettered: "John Mareschelli Vane."

"Vane? That was thy name," said Ambrose.

1890. Aetat 72.
AN EMINENT CITIZEN, A PUBLIC BENEFACTOR, AND WIDELY ESTEEMED.
FOR THE LOVE OF HIS NATIVE PLACE RETURNED TO LAY HIS DUST THEREIN.
THE JUST MADE PERFECT.

"It would seem he did well, and rounded his labors to a goodly end, lying down among his kindred as a sheaf that is garnered in the autumn. He was fortunate."

And Margaret spoke, in the thin, emotionless voice which those who are long in the graveyard use: "He was my brother."

"Thy brother?" said Ambrose.

The Little One looked up and down the spiral with wide eyes. The other two looked past it into the deep white valley, where the river, covered with ice and snow, was marked only by the lines of skeleton willows and poplars. A night wind, listless but continual, stirred the evergreens. The moon swung low over the opposite hills, and for a moment slipped behind a cloud.

"Says it not so, 'For the Love of his Native Place'?" murmured Ambrose.

And as the moon came out, there leaned against the pedestal, pointing with a finger at the epitaph, one that seemed an old man, with bowed shoulders and keen, restless face, but in his manner cowed and weary.

"It is a lie," he said slowly. "I hated it, Margaret. I came because Ellen Mercer called me."

"Ellen isn't buried here."

"Not here!"

"Not here."

"Was it you, then, Margaret? Why?"

"I didn't call you."

"Who then?" he shrieked. "Who called me?"

The night wind moved on monotonously, and the moonlight was undisturbed, like glassy water.

"When I came away," she said, "I thought you would marry her. You didn't, then? But why should she call you?"

"I left the village suddenly!" he cried. "I grew to dread, and then to hate it. I buried myself from the knowledge of it, and the memory of it was my enemy. I wished for a distant death, and these fifty years have heard the summons to come and lay my bones in this graveyard. I thought it was Ellen. You, sir, wear an antique dress; you have been long in this strange existence. Can you tell who called me? If not Ellen, where is Ellen?" He wrung his hands, and rocked to and fro.

"The mystery is with the dead as with the living," said Ambrose. "The shadows of the future and the past come among us. We look in their eyes, and understand them not. Now and again there is a call even here, and the grave is henceforth untenanted of its spirit. Here, too, we know a necessity which binds us, which speaks not with audible voice and will not be questioned."

"But tell me," moaned the other, "does the weight of sin depend upon its consequences? Then what weight do I bear? I do not know whether it was ruin or death, or a thing gone by and forgotten. Is there no answer here to this?"

"Death is but a step in the process of life," answered Ambrose. "I know not if any are ruined or anything forgotten. Look up, to the order of the stars, an handwriting on the wall of the firmament. But who hath read it? Mark this night wind, a still small voice. But what speaketh it? The earth is clothed in white garments as a bride. What mean the ceremonials of the seasons? The will from without is only known as it is manifested. Nor does it manifest where the consequences of the deed end or its causes began. Have they any end or a beginning? I cannot answer you."

"Who called me, Margaret?"

And she said again monotonously, "I didn't call you."

The Little One sat between Ambrose and Margaret, chuckling

to himself and gazing up at the newcomer, who suddenly bent forward and looked into his eyes, with a gasp.

"What is this?" he whispered.

"'Thy Little One, O God, aetat 2,' from the Mercer Lot," returned Ambrose gently. "He is very quiet. Art not neglecting thy business, Little One? The lower walks are unvisited tonight."

"They are Ellen's eyes!" cried the other, moaning and rocking. "Did you call me? Were you mine?"

"It is written, 'Thy Little One, O God,'" murmured Ambrose.

But the Little One only curled his feet up under his gown, and now chuckled contentedly.

THE MOST DANGEROUS GAME[1]

By RICHARD CONNELL

OFF there to the right—somewhere—is a large island," said Whitney. "It's rather a mystery—"

"What island is it?" Rainsford asked.

"The old charts call it 'Ship-Trap Island,'" Whitney replied. "A suggestive name, isn't it? Sailors have a curious dread of the place. I don't know why. Some superstition—"

"Can't see it," remarked Rainsford, trying to peer through the dank tropical night that was palpable as it pressed its thick warm blackness in upon the yacht.

"You've good eyes," said Whitney, with a laugh, "and I've seen you pick off a moose moving in the brown fall bush at four hundred yards, but even you can't see four miles or so through a moonless Caribbean night."

"Nor four yards," admitted Rainsford. "Ugh! It's like moist black velvet."

"It will be light enough in Rio," promised Whitney. "We should make it in a few days. I hope the jaguar guns have come from Purdey's. We should have some good hunting up the Amazon. Great sport, hunting."

"The best sport in the world," agreed Rainsford.

"For the hunter," amended Whitney. "Not for the jaguar."

"Don't talk rot, Whitney," said Rainsford. "You're a big-game hunter, not a philosopher. Who cares how a jaguar feels?"

"Perhaps the jaguar does," observed Whitney.

"Bah! They've no understanding."

"Even so, I rather think they understand one thing—fear. The fear of pain and the fear of death."

"Nonsense," laughed Rainsford. "This hot weather is making you soft, Whitney. Be a realist. The world is made up of two classes—the hunters and the huntees. Luckily, you and I are hunters. Do you think we've passed that island yet?"

"I can't tell in the dark. I hope so."

---

[1] From *Collier's*, January 19, 1924; copyright, 1924, by the author. Reprinted by permission of the author.

"Why?" asked Rainsford.

"The place has a reputation—a bad one."

"Cannibals?" suggested Rainsford.

"Hardly. Even cannibals wouldn't live in such a God-forsaken place. But it's gotten into sailor lore, somehow. Didn't you notice that the crew's nerves seemed a bit jumpy to-day?"

"They were a bit strange, now you mention it. Even Captain Nielsen—"

"Yes, even that tough-minded old Swede, who'd go up to the devil himself and ask him for a light. Those fishy blue eyes held a look I never saw there before. All I could get out of him was: 'This place has an evil name among seafaring men, sir.' Then he said to me, very gravely: 'Don't you feel anything?'—as if the air about us was actually poisonous. Now, you mustn't laugh when I tell you this—I did feel something like a sudden chill.

"There was no breeze. The sea was as flat as a plate-glass window. We were drawing near the island then. What I felt was a—a mental chill; a sort of sudden dread."

"Pure imagination," said Rainsford. "One superstitious sailor can taint the whole ship's company with his fear."

"Maybe. But sometimes I think sailors have an extra sense that tells them when they are in danger. Sometimes I think evil is a tangible thing—with wave lengths, just as sound and light have. An evil place can, so to speak, broadcast vibrations of evil. Anyhow, I'm glad we're getting out of this zone. Well, I think I'll turn in now, Rainsford."

"I'm not sleepy," said Rainsford. "I'm going to smoke another pipe up on the after deck."

"Good night, then, Rainsford. See you at breakfast."

"Right. Good night, Whitney."

There was no sound in the night as Rainsford sat there, but the muffled throb of the engine that drove the yacht swiftly through the darkness, and the swish and ripple of the wash of the propeller.

Rainsford, reclining in a steamer chair, indolently puffed on his favorite brier. The sensuous drowsiness of the night was on him. "It's so dark," he thought, "that I could sleep without closing my eyes; the night would be my eyelids—"

An abrupt sound startled him. Off to the right he heard it, and his ears, expert in such matters, could not be mistaken.

Again he heard the sound, and again. Somewhere, off in the blackness, some one had fired a gun three times.

Rainsford sprang up and moved quickly to the rail, mystified. He strained his eyes in the direction from which the reports had come, but it was like trying to see through a blanket. He leaped upon the rail and balanced himself there, to get greater elevation; his pipe, striking a rope, was knocked from his mouth. He lunged for it; a short, hoarse cry came from his lips as he realized he had reached too far and had lost his balance. The cry was pinched off short as the blood-warm waters of the Caribbean Sea closed over his head.

He struggled up to the surface and tried to cry out, but the wash from the speeding yacht slapped him in the face and the salt water in his open mouth made him gag and strangle. Desperately he struck out with strong strokes after the receding lights of the yacht, but he stopped before he had swum fifty feet. A certain cool-headedness had come to him; it was not the first time he had been in a tight place. There was a chance that his cries could be heard by some one aboard the yacht, but that chance was slender, and grew more slender as the yacht raced on. He wrestled himself out of his clothes, and shouted with all his power. The lights of the yacht became faint and ever-vanishing fireflies; then they were blotted out entirely by the night.

Rainsford remembered the shots. They had come from the right, and doggedly he swam in that direction, swimming with slow, deliberate strokes, conserving his strength. For a seemingly endless time he fought the sea. He began to count his strokes; he could do possibly a hundred more and then—

Rainsford heard a sound. It came out of the darkness, a high, screaming sound, the sound of an animal in an extremity of anguish and terror.

He did not recognize the animal that made the sound; he did not try to; with fresh vitality he swam toward the sound. He heard it again; then it was cut short by another noise, crisp, staccato.

"Pistol shot," muttered Rainsford, swimming on.

Ten minutes of determined effort brought another sound to his ears—the most welcome he had ever heard—the muttering and growling of the sea breaking on a rocky shore. He was almost on the rocks before he saw them; on a night less calm he would have

been shattered against them. With his remaining strength he dragged himself from the swirling waters. Jagged crags appeared to jut up into the opaqueness; he forced himself upward, hand over hand. Gasping, his hands raw, he reached a flat place at the top. Dense jungle came down to the very edge of the cliffs. What perils that tangle of trees and underbrush might hold for him did not concern Rainsford just then. All he knew was that he was safe from his enemy, the sea, and that utter weariness was on him. He flung himself down at the jungle edge and tumbled headlong into the deepest sleep of his life.

When he opened his eyes he knew from the position of the sun that it was late in the afternoon. Sleep had given him new vigor; a sharp hunger was picking at him. He looked about him, almost cheerfully.

"Where there are pistol shots, there are men. Where there are men, there is food," he thought. But what kind of men, he wondered, in so forbidding a place? An unbroken front of snarled and ragged jungle fringed the shore.

He saw no sign of a trail through the closely knit web of weeds and trees; it was easier to go along the shore, and Rainsford floundered along by the water. Not far from where he had landed, he stopped.

Some wounded thing, by the evidence a large animal, had thrashed about in the underbrush; the jungle weeds were crushed down and the moss was lacerated; one patch of weeds was stained crimson. A small, glittering object not far away caught Rainsford's eye and he picked it up. It was an empty cartridge.

"A twenty-two," he remarked. "That's odd. It must have been a fairly large animal, too. The hunter had his nerve with him to tackle it with a light gun. It's clear that the brute put up a fight. I suppose the first three shots I heard was when the hunter flushed his quarry and wounded it. The last shot was when he trailed it here and finished it."

He examined the ground closely and found what he had hoped to find—the print of hunting boots. They pointed along the cliff in the direction he had been going. Eagerly he hurried along, now slipping on a rotten log or a loose stone, but making headway; night was beginning to settle down on the island.

Bleak darkness was blacking out the sea and jungle when Rainsford sighted the lights. He came upon them as he turned a crook in the coast line, and his first thought was that he had

come upon a village, for there were many lights. But as he forged along he saw to his great astonishment that all the lights were in one enormous building—a lofty structure with pointed towers plunging upward into the gloom. His eyes made out the shadowy outlines of a palatial château; it was set on a high bluff, and on three sides of it cliffs dived down to where the sea licked greedy lips in the shadows.

"Mirage," thought Rainsford. But it was no mirage, he found, when he opened the tall spiked iron gate. The stone steps were real enough; the massive door with a leering gargoyle for a knocker was real enough; yet about it all hung an air of unreality.

He lifted the knocker, and it creaked up stiffly, as if it had never before been used. He let it fall, and it startled him with its booming loudness. He thought he heard steps within; the door remained closed. Again Rainsford lifted the heavy knocker, and let it fall. The door opened then, opened as suddenly as if it were on a spring, and Rainsford stood blinking in the river of glaring gold light that poured out. The first thing Rainsford's eyes discerned was the largest man Rainsford had ever seen—a gigantic creature, solidly made and black-bearded to the waist. In his hand the man held a long-barreled revolver, and he was pointing it straight at Rainsford's heart.

Out of the snarl of beard two small eyes regarded Rainsford.

"Don't be alarmed," said Rainsford, with a smile which he hoped was disarming. "I'm no robber. I fell off a yacht. My name is Sanger Rainsford of New York City."

The menacing look in the eyes did not change. The revolver pointed as rigidly as if the giant were a statue. He gave no sign that he understood Rainsford's words, or that he had even heard them. He was dressed in uniform, a black uniform trimmed with gray astrakhan.

"I'm Sanger Rainsford of New York," Rainsford began again. "I fell off a yacht. I am hungry."

The man's only answer was to raise with his thumb the hammer of his revolver. Then Rainsford saw the man's free hand go to his forehead in a military salute, and he saw him click his heels together and stand at attention. Another man was coming down the broad marble steps, an erect, slender man in evening clothes. He advanced to Rainsford and held out his hand.

In a cultivated voice marked by a slight accent that gave it added precision and deliberateness, he said: "It is a very great pleasure and honor to welcome Mr. Sanger Rainsford, the celebrated hunter, to my home."

Automatically Rainsford shook the man's hand.

"I've read your book about hunting snow leopards in Tibet, you see," explained the man. "I am General Zaroff."

Rainsford's first impression was that the man was singularly handsome; his second was that there was an original, almost bizarre quality about the general's face. He was a tall man past middle age, for his hair was a vivid white; but his thick eyebrows and pointed military mustache were as black as the night from which Rainsford had come. His eyes, too, were black and very bright. He had high cheek bones, a sharp-cut nose, a spare, dark face, the face of a man used to giving orders, the face of an aristocrat. Turning to the giant in uniform, the general made a sign. The giant put away his pistol, saluted, withdrew.

"Ivan is an incredibly strong fellow," remarked the general, "but he has the misfortune to be deaf and dumb. A simple fellow, but, I'm afraid, like all his race, a bit of a savage."

"Is he Russian?"

"He is a Cossack," said the general, and his smile showed red lips and pointed teeth. "So am I.

"Come," he said, "we shouldn't be chatting here. We can talk later. Now you want clothes, food, rest. You shall have them. This is a most restful spot."

Ivan had reappeared, and the general spoke to him with lips that moved but gave forth no sound.

"Follow Ivan, if you please, Mr. Rainsford," said the general. "I was about to have my dinner when you came. I'll wait for you. You'll find that my clothes will fit you, I think."

It was a huge, beam-ceilinged bedroom with a canopied bed big enough for six men that Rainsford followed the silent giant. Ivan laid out an evening suit, and Rainsford, as he put it on, noticed that it came from a London tailor who ordinarily cut and sewed for none below the rank of duke.

The dining room to which Ivan conducted him was in many ways remarkable. There was a medieval magnificence about it; it suggested a baronial hall of feudal times with its oaken panels, its high ceiling, its vast refectory table where twoscore men could sit down to eat. About the hall were the mounted heads

of many animals—lions, tigers, elephants, moose, bears; larger or more perfect specimens Rainsford had never seen. At the great table the general was sitting, alone.

"You'll have a cocktail, Mr. Rainsford," he suggested. The cocktail was surpassingly good; and, Rainsford noted, the table appointments were of the finest—the linen, the crystal, the silver, the china.

They were eating *borsch,* the rich red soup with whipped cream so dear to Russian palates. Half apologetically General Zaroff said: "We do our best to preserve the amenities of civilization here. Please forgive any lapses. We are well off the beaten track, you know. Do you think the champagne has suffered from its long ocean trip?"

"Not in the least," declared Rainsford. He was finding the general a most thoughtful and affable host, a true cosmopolite. But there was one small trait of the general's that made Rainsford uncomfortable. Whenever he looked up from his plate he found the general studying him, appraising him narrowly.

"Perhaps," said General Zaroff, "you were surprised that I recognized your name. You see, I read all books on hunting published in English, French, and Russian. I have but one passion in my life, Mr. Rainsford, and it is the hunt."

"You have some wonderful heads here," said Rainsford as he ate a particularly well-cooked filet mignon. "That Cape buffalo is the largest I ever saw."

"Oh, that fellow. Yes, he was a monster."

"Did he charge you?"

"Hurled me against a tree," said the general. "Fractured my skull. But I got the brute."

"I've always thought," said Rainsford, "that the Cape buffalo is the most dangerous of all big game."

For a moment the general did not reply; he was smiling his curious red-lipped smile. Then he said slowly: "No. You are wrong, sir. The Cape buffalo is not the most dangerous big game." He sipped his wine. "Here in my preserve on this island," he said in the same slow tone, "I hunt more dangerous game."

Rainsford expressed his surprise. "Is there big game on this island?"

The general nodded. "The biggest."

"Really?"

"Oh, it isn't here naturally, of course. I have to stock the island."

"What have you imported, general?" Rainsford asked. "Tigers?"

The general smiled. "No," he said. "Hunting tigers ceased to interest me some years ago. I exhausted their possibilities, you see. No thrill left in tigers, no real danger. I live for danger, Mr. Rainsford."

The general took from his pocket a gold cigarette case and offered his guest a long black cigarette with a silver tip; it was perfumed and gave off a smell like incense.

"We will have some capital hunting, you and I," said the general. "I shall be most glad to have your society."

"But what game—" began Rainsford.

"I'll tell you," said the general. "You will be amused, I know. I think I may say, in all modesty, that I have done a rare thing. I have invented a new sensation. May I pour you another glass of port, Mr. Rainsford?"

"Thank you, general."

The general filled both glasses, and said: "God makes some men poets. Some He makes kings, some beggars. Me He made a hunter. My hand was made for the trigger, my father said. He was a very rich man with a quarter of a million acres in the Crimea, and he was an ardent sportsman. When I was only five years old he gave me a little gun, specially made in Moscow for me, to shoot sparrows with. When I shot some of his prize turkeys with it, he did not punish me; he complimented me on my marksmanship. I killed my first bear in the Caucasus when I was ten. My whole life has been one prolonged hunt. I went into the army—it was expected of noblemen's sons—and for a time commanded a division of Cossack cavalry, but my real interest was always the hunt. I have hunted every kind of game in every land. It would be impossible for me to tell you how many animals I have killed."

The general puffed at his cigarette.

"After the debacle in Russia I left the country, for it was imprudent for an officer of the Czar to stay there. Many noble Russians lost everything. I, luckily, had invested heavily in American securities, so I shall never have to open a tea room in Monte Carlo or drive a taxi in Paris. Naturally, I continued to hunt—grizzlies in your Rockies, crocodiles in the Ganges, rhi-

noceroses in East Africa. It was in Africa that the Cape buffalo hit me and laid me up for six months. As soon as I recovered I started for the Amazon to hunt jaguars, for I had heard they were unusually cunning. They weren't." The Cossack sighed. "They were no match at all for a hunter with his wits about him, and a high-powered rifle. I was bitterly disappointed. I was lying in my tent with a splitting headache one night when a terrible thought pushed its way into my mind. Hunting was beginning to bore me! And hunting, remember, had been my life. I have heard that in America business men often go to pieces when they give up the business that has been their life."

"Yes, that's so," said Rainsford.

The general smiled. "I had no wish to go to pieces," he said. "I must do something. Now, mine is an analytical mind, Mr. Rainsford. Doubtless that is why I enjoy the problems of the chase."

"No, doubt, General Zaroff."

"So," continued the general, "I asked myself why the hunt no longer fascinated me. You are much younger than I am, Mr. Rainsford, and have not hunted as much, but you perhaps can guess the answer."

"What was it?"

"Simply this: hunting had ceased to be what you call 'a sporting proposition.' It had become too easy. I always got my quarry. Always. There is no greater bore than perfection."

The general lit a fresh cigarette.

"No animal had a chance with me any more. That is no boast; it is a mathematical certainty. The animal had nothing but his legs and his instinct. Instinct is no match for reason. When I thought of this it was a tragic moment for me, I can tell you."

Rainsford leaned across the table, absorbed in what his host was saying.

"It came to me as an inspiration what I must do," the general went on.

"And that was?"

The general smiled the quiet smile of one who has faced an obstacle and surmounted it with success. "I had to invent a new animal to hunt," he said.

"A new animal? You're joking."

"Not at all," said the general. "I never joke about hunting. I needed a new animal. I found one. So I bought this island,

built this house, and here I do my hunting. The island is perfect for my purposes—there are jungles with a maze of trails in them, hills, swamps—"

"But the animal, General Zaroff?"

"Oh," said the general, "it supplies me with the most exciting hunting in the world. No other hunting compares with it for an instant. Every day I hunt, and I never grow bored now, for I have a quarry with which I can match my wits."

Rainsford's bewilderment showed in his face.

"I wanted the ideal animal to hunt," explained the general. "So I said: 'What are the attributes of an ideal quarry?' And the answer was, of course: 'It must have courage, cunning, and, above all, it must be able to reason.'"

"But no animal can reason," objected Rainsford.

"My dear fellow," said the general, "there is one that can."

"But you can't mean—" gasped Rainsford.

"And why not?"

"I can't believe you are serious, General Zaroff. This is a grisly joke."

"Why should I not be serious? I am speaking of hunting."

"Hunting? Good God, General Zaroff, what you speak of is murder."

The general laughed with entire good nature. He regarded Rainsford quizzically. "I refuse to believe that so modern and civilized a young man as you seem to be harbors romantic ideas about the value of human life. Surely your experiences in the war—"

"Did not make me condone cold-blooded murder," finished Rainsford stiffly.

Laughter shook the general. "How extraordinarily droll you are!" he said. "One does not expect nowadays to find a young man of the educated class, even in America, with such a naïve, and, if I may say so, mid-Victorian point of view. It's like finding a snuffbox in a limousine. Ah, well, doubtless you had Puritan ancestors. So many Americans appear to have had. I'll wager you'll forget your notions when you go hunting with me. You've a genuine new thrill in store for you, Mr. Rainsford."

"Thank you, I'm a hunter, not a murderer."

"Dear me," said the general, quite unruffled, "again that unpleasant word. But I think I can show you that your scruples are quite ill founded."

"Yes?"

"Life is for the strong, to be lived by the strong, and, if needs be, taken by the strong. The weak of the world were put here to give the strong pleasure. I am strong. Why should I not use my gift? If I wish to hunt, why should I not? I hunt the scum of the earth—sailors from tramp ships—lascars, blacks, Chinese, whites, mongrels—a thoroughbred horse or hound is worth more than a score of them."

"But they are men," said Rainsford hotly.

"Precisely," said the general. "That is why I use them. It gives me pleasure. They can reason, after a fashion. So they are dangerous."

"But where do you get them?"

The general's left eyelid fluttered down in a wink. "This island is called Ship-Trap," he answered. "Sometimes an angry god of the high seas sends them to me. Sometimes, when Providence is not so kind, I help Providence a bit. Come to the window with me."

Rainsford went to the window and looked out toward the sea.

"Watch! Out there!" exclaimed the general, pointing into the night. Rainsford's eyes saw only blackness, and then, as the general pressed a button, far out to sea Rainsford saw the flash of lights.

The general chuckled. "They indicate a channel," he said, "where there's none: giant rocks with razor edges crouch like a sea monster with wide-open jaws. They can crush a ship as easily as I crush this nut." He dropped a walnut on the hardwood floor and brought his heel grinding down on it. "Oh, yes," he said, casually, as if in answer to a question, "I have electricity. We try to be civilized here."

"Civilized? And you shoot down men?"

A trace of anger was in the general's black eyes, but it was there for but a second, and he said, in his most pleasant manner: "Dear me, what a righteous young man you are! I assure you I do not do the thing you suggest. That would be barbarous. I treat these visitors with every consideration. They get plenty of good food and exercise. They get into splendid physical condition. You shall see for yourself to-morrow."

"What do you mean?"

"We'll visit my training school," smiled the general. "It's in the cellar. I have about a dozen pupils down there now. They're

from the Spanish bark *San Lucar* that had the bad luck to go on the rocks out there. A very inferior lot, I regret to say. Poor specimens and more accustomed to the deck than to the jungle."

He raised his hand, and Ivan, who served as waiter, brought thick Turkish coffee. Rainsford, with an effort, held his tongue in check.

"It's a game, you see," pursued the general blandly. "I suggest to one of them that we go hunting. I give him a supply of food and an excellent hunting knife. I give him three hours' start. I am to follow, armed only with a pistol of the smallest caliber and range. If my quarry eludes me for three whole days, he wins the game. If I find him"—the general smiled—"he loses."

"Suppose he refuses to be hunted?"

"Oh," said the general, "I give him his option, of course. He need not play that game if he doesn't wish to. If he does not wish to hunt, I turn him over to Ivan. Ivan once had the honor of serving as official knouter to the Great White Czar, and he has his own ideas of sport. Invariably, Mr. Rainsford, invariably they choose the hunt."

"And if they win?"

The smile on the general's face widened. "To date I have not lost," he said.

Then he added, hastily: "I don't wish you to think me a braggart, Mr. Rainsford. Many of them afford only the most elementary sort of problem. Occasionally I strike a tartar. One almost did win. I eventually had to use the dogs."

"The dogs?"

"This way, please. I'll show you."

The general steered Rainsford to a window. The lights from the windows sent a flickering illumination that made grotesque patterns on the courtyard below, and Rainsford could see moving about there a dozen or so huge black shapes; as they turned toward him, their eyes glittered greenly.

"A rather good lot, I think," observed the general. "They are let out at seven every night. If any one should try to get into my house—or out of it—something extremely regrettable would occur to him." He hummed a snatch of song from the "Folies Bergères."

"And now," said the general, "I want to show you my new collection of heads. Will you come with me to the library?"

"I hope," said Rainsford, "that you will excuse me to-night, General Zaroff. I'm really not feeling at all well."

"Ah, indeed?" the general inquired solicitously. "Well, I suppose that's only natural, after your long swim. You need a good, restful night's sleep. To-morrow you'll feel like a new man, I'll wager. Then we'll hunt, eh? I've one rather promising prospect—"

Rainsford was hurrying from the room.

"Sorry you can't go with me to-night," called the general. "I expect rather fair sport—a big, strong black. He looks resourceful— Well, good night, Mr. Rainsford; I hope you have a good night's rest."

The bed was good, and the pajamas of the softest silk, and he was tired in every fiber of his being, but nevertheless Rainsford could not quiet his brain with the opiate of sleep. He lay, eyes wide open. Once he thought he heard stealthy steps in the corridor outside his room. He sought to throw open the door; it would not open. He went to the window and looked out. His room was high up in one of the towers. The lights of the château were out now, and it was dark and silent, but there was a fragment of sallow moon, and by its wan light he could see, dimly, the courtyard; there, weaving in and out in the pattern of shadow, were black, noiseless forms; the hounds heard him at the window and looked up, expectantly, with their green eyes. Rainsford went back to the bed and lay down. By many methods he tried to put himself to sleep. He had achieved a doze when, just as morning began to come, he heard, far off in the jungle, the faint report of a pistol.

General Zaroff did not appear until luncheon. He was dressed faultlessly in the tweeds of a country squire. He was solicitous about the state of Rainsford's health.

"As for me," sighed the general, "I do not feel so well. I am worried, Mr. Rainsford. Last night I detected traces of my old complaint."

To Rainsford's questioning glance the general said: "Ennui. Boredom."

Then, taking a second helping of Crêpes Suzette, the general explained: "The hunting was not good last night. The fellow lost his head. He made a straight trail that offered no problems at all. That's the trouble with these sailors; they have dull brains

to begin with, and they do not know how to get about in the woods. They do excessively stupid and obvious things. It's most annoying. Will you have another glass of Chablis, Mr. Rainsford?"

"General," said Rainsford firmly, "I wish to leave this island at once."

The general raised his thickets of eyebrows; he seemed hurt. "But, my dear fellow," the general protested, "you've only just come. You've had no hunting—"

"I wish to go to-day," said Rainsford. He saw the dead black eyes of the general on him, studying him. General Zaroff's face suddenly brightened.

He filled Rainsford's glass with venerable Chablis from a dusty bottle.

"To-night," said the general, "we will hunt—you and I."

Rainsford shook his head. "No, general," he said. "I will not hunt."

The general shrugged his shoulders and delicately ate a hothouse grape. "As you wish, my friend," he said. "The choice rests entirely with you. But may I not venture to suggest that you will find my idea of sport more diverting than Ivan's?"

He nodded toward the corner to where the giant stood, scowling, his thick arms crossed on his hogshead of chest.

"You don't mean—" cried Rainsford.

"My dear fellow," said the general, "have I not told you I always mean what I say about hunting? This is really an inspiration. I drink to a foeman worthy of my steel—at last."

The general raised his glass, but Rainsford sat staring at him.

"You'll find this game worth playing," the general said enthusiastically. "Your brain against mine. Your woodcraft against mine. Your strength and stamina against mine. Outdoor chess! And the stake is not without value, eh?"

"And if I win—" began Rainsford huskily.

"I'll cheerfully acknowledge myself defeated if I do not find you by midnight of the third day," said General Zaroff. "My sloop will place you on the mainland near a town."

The general read what Rainsford was thinking.

"Oh, you can trust me," said the Cossack. "I will give you my word as a gentleman and a sportsman. Of course you, in turn, must agree to say nothing of your visit here."

"I'll agree to nothing of the kind," said Rainsford.

"Oh," said the general, "in that case— But why discuss that now? Three days hence we can discuss it over a bottle of Veuve Cliquot, unless—"

The general sipped his wine.

Then a businesslike air animated him. "Ivan," he said to Rainsford, "will supply you with hunting clothes, food, a knife. I suggest you wear moccasins; they leave a poorer trail. I suggest, too, that you avoid the big swamp in the southeast corner of the island. We call it Death Swamp. There's quicksand there. One foolish fellow tried it. The deplorable part of it was that Lazarus followed him. You can imagine my feelings, Mr. Rainsford. I loved Lazarus; he was the finest hound in my pack. Well, I must beg you to excuse me now. I always take a siesta after lunch. You'll hardly have time for a nap, I fear. You'll want to start, no doubt. I shall not follow till dusk. Hunting at night is so much more exciting than by day, don't you think? Au revoir, Mr. Rainsford, au revoir."

General Zaroff, with a deep, courtly bow, strolled from the room.

From another door came Ivan. Under one arm he carried khaki hunting clothes, a haversack of food, a leather sheath containing a long-bladed hunting knife; his right hand rested on a cocked revolver thrust in the crimson sash about his waist. . . .

Rainsford had fought his way through the bush for two hours. "I must keep my nerve. I must keep my nerve," he said through tight teeth.

He had not been entirely clear-headed when the château gates snapped shut behind him. His whole idea at first was to put distance between himself and General Zaroff, and, to this end, he had plunged along, spurred on by the sharp rowels of something very like panic. Now he had got a grip on himself, had stopped, and was taking stock of himself and the situation.

He saw that straight flight was futile; inevitably it would bring him face to face with the sea. He was in a picture with a frame of water, and his operations, clearly, must take place within that frame.

"I'll give him a trail to follow," muttered Rainsford, and he struck off from the rude path he had been following into the trackless wilderness. He executed a series of intricate loops; he doubled on his trail again and again, recalling all the lore of the

fox hunt, and all the dodges of the fox. Night found him leg-weary, with hands and face lashed by the branches, on a thickly wooded ridge. He knew it would be insane to blunder on through the dark, even if he had the strength. His need for rest was imperative and he thought: "I have played the fox, now I must play the cat of the fable." A big tree with a thick trunk and outspread branches was near by, and, taking care to leave not the slightest mark, he climbed up into the crotch, and stretching out on one of the broad limbs, after a fashion, rested. Rest brought him new confidence and almost a feeling of security. Even so zealous a hunter as General Zaroff could not trace him there, he told himself; only the devil himself could follow that complicated trail through the jungle after dark. But, perhaps, the general was a devil—

An apprehensive night crawled slowly by like a wounded snake, and sleep did not visit Rainsford, although the silence of a dead world was on the jungle. Toward morning when a dingy gray was varnishing the sky, the cry of some startled bird focused Rainsford's attention in that direction. Something was coming through the bush, coming slowly, carefully, coming by the same winding way Rainsford had come. He flattened himself down on the limb, and through a screen of leaves almost as thick as tapestry, he watched. The thing that was approaching was a man.

It was General Zaroff. He made his way along with his eyes fixed in utmost concentration on the ground before him. He paused, almost beneath the tree, dropped to his knees and studied the ground. Rainsford's impulse was to hurl himself down like a panther, but he saw that the general's right hand held something metallic—a small automatic pistol.

The hunter shook his head several times, as if he were puzzled. Then he straightened up and took from his case one of his black cigarettes; its pungent incenselike smoke floated up to Rainsford's nostrils.

Rainsford held his breath. The general's eyes had left the ground and were traveling inch by inch up the tree. Rainsford froze there, every muscle tensed for a spring. But the sharp eyes of the hunter stopped before they reached the limb where Rainsford lay; a smile spread over his brown face. Very deliberately he blew a smoke ring into the air; then he turned his back on the tree and walked carelessly away, back along the trail he had

Lenoir Rhyne College
LIBRARY

come. The swish of the underbrush against his hunting boots grew fainter and fainter.

The pent-up air burst hotly from Rainsford's lungs. His first thought made him feel sick and numb. The general could follow a trail through the woods at night; he could follow an extremely difficult trail; he must have uncanny powers; only by the merest chance had the Cossack failed to see his quarry.

Rainsford's second thought was even more terrible. It sent a shudder of cold horror through his whole being. Why had the general smiled? Why had he turned back?

Rainsford did not want to believe what his reason told him was true, but the truth was as evident as the sun that had by now pushed through the morning mists. The general was playing with him! The general was saving him for another day's sport! The Cossack was the cat; he was the mouse. Then it was that Rainsford knew the full meaning of terror.

"I will not lose my nerve. I will not."

He slid down from the tree, and struck off again into the woods. His face was set and he forced the machinery of his mind to function. Three hundred yards from his hiding place he stopped where a huge dead tree leaned precariously on a smaller, living one. Throwing off his sack of food, Rainsford took his knife from its sheath and began to work with all his energy.

The job was finished at last, and he threw himself down behind a fallen log a hundred feet away. He did not have to wait long. The cat was coming again to play with the mouse.

Following the trail with the sureness of a bloodhound, came General Zaroff. Nothing escaped those searching black eyes, no crushed blade of grass, no bent twig, no mark, no matter how faint, in the moss. So intent was the Cossack on his stalking that he was upon the thing Rainsford had made before he saw it. His foot touched the protruding bough that was the trigger. Even as he touched it, the general sensed his danger and leaped back with the agility of an ape. But he was not quite quick enough; the dead tree, delicately adjusted to rest on the cut living one, crashed down and struck the general a glancing blow on the shoulder as it fell; but for his alertness, he must have been smashed beneath it. He staggered, but he did not fall; nor did he drop his revolver. He stood there, rubbing his injured shoulder, and Rainsford, with fear again gripping his heart, heard the general's mocking laugh ring through the jungle.

"Rainsford," called the general, "if you are within sound of my voice, as I suppose you are, let me congratulate you. Not many men know how to make a Malay man-catcher. Luckily, for me, I too have hunted in Malacca. You are proving interesting, Mr. Rainsford. I am going now to have my wound dressed; it's only a slight one. But I shall be back. I shall be back."

When the general, nursing his bruised shoulder, had gone, Rainsford took up his flight again. It was flight now, a desperate, hopeless flight, that carried him on for some hours. Dusk came, then darkness, and still he pressed on. The ground grew softer under his moccasins; the vegetation grew ranker, denser; insects bit him savagely. Then, as he stepped forward, his foot sank into the ooze. He tried to wrench it back, but the muck sucked viciously at his foot as if it were a giant leech. With a violent effort, he tore his foot loose. He knew where he was now. Death Swamp and its quicksand.

His hands were tight closed as if his nerve were something tangible that some one in the darkness was trying to tear from his grip. The softness of the earth had given him an idea. He stepped back from the quicksand a dozen feet or so and, like some huge prehistoric beaver, he began to dig.

Rainsford had dug himself in in France when a second's delay meant death. That had been a placid pastime compared to his digging now. The pit grew deeper; when it was above his shoulders, he climbed out and from some hard saplings cut stakes and sharpened them to a fine point. These stakes he planted in the bottom of the pit with the points sticking up. With flying fingers he wove a rough carpet of weeds and branches and with it he covered the mouth of the pit. Then, wet with sweat and aching with tiredness, he crouched behind the stump of a lightning-charred tree.

He knew his pursuer was coming; he heard the padding sound of feet on the soft earth, and the night breeze brought him the perfume of the general's cigarette. It seemed to Rainsford that the general was coming with unusual swiftness; he was not feeling his way along, foot by foot. Rainsford, crouching there, could not see the general, nor could he see the pit. He lived a year in a minute. Then he felt an impulse to cry aloud with joy, for he heard the sharp crackle of the breaking branches as the cover of the pit gave way; he heard the sharp scream of pain as the

pointed stakes found their mark. He leaped up from his place of concealment. Then he cowered back. Three feet from the pit a man was standing, with an electric torch in his hand.

"You've done well, Rainsford," the voice of the general called. "Your Burmese tiger pit has claimed one of my best dogs. Again you score. I think, Mr. Rainsford, I'll see what you can do against my whole pack. I'm going home for a rest now. Thank you for a most amusing evening."

At daybreak Rainsford, lying near the swamp, was awakened by a sound that made him know that he had new things to learn about fear. It was a distant sound, faint and wavering, but he knew it. It was the baying of a pack of hounds.

Rainsford knew he could do one of two things. He could stay where he was and wait. That was suicide. He could flee. That was postponing the inevitable. For a moment he stood there, thinking. An idea that held a wild chance came to him, and, tightening his belt, he headed away from the swamp.

The baying of the hounds drew nearer, then still nearer, nearer, ever nearer. On a ridge Rainsford climbed a tree. Down a watercourse, not a quarter of a mile away, he could see the bush moving. Straining his eyes, he saw the lean figure of General Zaroff; just ahead of him Rainsford made out another figure whose wide shoulders surged through the tall jungle weeds; it was the giant Ivan, and he seemed pulled forward by some unseen force; Rainsford knew that Ivan must be holding the pack in leash.

They would be on him any minute now. His mind worked frantically. He thought of a native trick he had learned in Uganda. He slid down the tree. He caught hold of a springy young sapling and to it he fastened his hunting knife, with the blade pointing down the trail; with a bit of wild grapevine he tied back the sapling. Then he ran for his life. The hounds raised their voices as they hit the fresh scent. Rainsford knew now how an animal at bay feels.

He had to stop to get his breath. The baying of the hounds stopped abruptly, and Rainsford's heart stopped, too. They must have reached the knife.

He shinned excitedly up a tree and looked back. His pursuers had stopped. But the hope that was in Rainsford's brain when he climbed died, for he saw in the shallow valley that General

Zaroff was still on his feet. But Ivan was not. The knife, driven by the recoil of the springing tree, had not wholly failed.

Rainsford had hardly tumbled to the ground when the pack took up the cry again.

"Nerve, nerve, nerve!" he panted, as he dashed along. A blue gap showed between the trees dead ahead. Ever nearer drew the hounds. Rainsford forced himself on toward that gap. He reached it. It was the shore of the sea. Across a cove he could see the gloomy gray stone of the château. Twenty feet below him the sea rumbled and hissed. Rainsford hesitated. He heard the hounds. Then he leaped far out into the sea. . . .

When the general and his pack reached the place by the sea, the Cossack stopped. For some minutes he stood regarding the blue-green expanse of water. He shrugged his shoulders. Then he sat down, took a drink of brandy from a silver flask, lit a perfumed cigarette, and hummed a bit from "Madame Butterfly."

General Zaroff had an exceedingly good dinner in his great paneled dining hall that evening. With it he had a bottle of Pol Roger and half a bottle of Chambertin. Two slight annoyances kept him from perfect enjoyment. One was the thought that it would be difficult to replace Ivan; the other was that his quarry had escaped him; of course, the American hadn't played the game—so thought the general as he tasted his after-dinner liqueur. In his library he read, to soothe himself, from the works of Marcus Aurelius. At ten he went up to his bedroom. He was deliciously tired, he said to himself, as he locked himself in. There was a little moonlight, so, before turning on his light, he went to the window and looked down at the courtyard. He could see the great hounds, and he called: "Better luck another time," to them. Then he switched on the light.

A man, who had been hiding in the curtains of the bed, was standing there.

"Rainsford!" screamed the general. "How in God's name did you get here?"

"Swam," said Rainsford. "I found it quicker than walking through the jungle."

The general sucked in his breath and smiled. "I congratulate you," he said. "You have won the game."

Rainsford did not smile. "I am still a beast at bay," he said, in a low, hoarse voice. "Get ready, General Zaroff."

The general made one of his deepest bows. "I see," he said. "Splendid! One of us is to furnish a repast for the hounds. The other will sleep in this very excellent bed. On guard, Rainsford." . . .

He had never slept in a better bed, Rainsford decided.

THE TRAWLER[1]

By JAMES B. CONNOLLY

I

TO John Snow's home in Gloucester came the tale this night of how Arthur Snow was washed from the deck of Hugh Glynn's vessel and lost at sea; and it was Saul Haverick, his sea clothes still on him, who brought the word.

"I'm telling you, John Snow," said Saul—and he out of breath almost with the telling—"and others than me will by an' by be telling you, what a black night it was, with a high-running sea and wind to blow the last coat o' paint off the vessel, but o' course *he* had to be the first o' the fleet—nothing less would do *him*—to make the market with his big ketch. It was for others, not for him, to show the way to take in sail, he said, and not a full hour before it happened that was." Such was Saul Haverick's ending.

John Snow said nothing; Mrs. Snow said nothing. Saul looked to me, but I gave no sign that I had heard him. Only John Snow's niece, Mary, looking up from her hands folded in her lap, said: "Surely you must find it painful, Saul Haverick, to ship with such a wicked man and take the big shares of money that fall to his crew?"

"Eh?" said Saul, frightened-like at her. "I'm not denying that he is a great fish killer, Mary Snow, and that we haven't shared some big trips with him; but it is like his religion, I'm telling you, to be able to say how he allowed no man ever he crossed tacks with to work to wind'ard of him. He's that vain he'd drive the vessel, himself, and all hands to the bottom afore he'd let some folks think anything else of him."

"He lost my boy—we'll say no more of him," said John Snow.

"Ay," said Saul Haverick, "we'll speak no more of him. But I was Arthur's dory mate, John Snow, as you well know, and my heart is sick to think of it. I'll be going now," and go he did,

---

[1] *The Trawler,* by James B. Connolly; copyright, 1914, by Charles Scribner's Sons. Reprinted by permission of the author and the publishers.

softly and by way of the back stairs; and he no more than gone when a knock came to the door.

After a time, the clock on the mantel ticking loud among us, John Snow called out: "Come in!"

II

I remember how Hugh Glynn stepped within the door of John Snow's kitchen that night, and how he bent his head to step within; and, bending his head, took off his cap; and how he bowed to John Snow, Mrs. Snow, and Mary Snow in turn, and, facing John Snow, made as if to speak; but how his voice would not come, not until he had lifted his head yet higher and cleared his throat. And beginning again, he took a step nearer the middle of the floor, to where the light of the bracket lamp above the kitchen table shone full on his face. He was a grand man to look at, not only his face but the height and build of him, and he was fresh in from sea.

"John Snow—and you, Mrs. Snow—the *Arbiter's* to anchor in the stream, and her flag's to half-mast. And knowing that, maybe there's no need to say anything more."

Mrs. Snow said nothing, Mary Snow said nothing, but I remember how from under John Snow's brows the deep eyes glowed out.

"Go on," said John Snow at last.

Hugh Glynn went on. "Well, he was a good boy, your Arthur —maybe you'd like to be told that, even by me, though of course you that was his father, John Snow, and you that was his mother, Mrs. Snow, know better than anybody else what he was. Three nights ago it was, and we to the south'ard of Sable Island in as nasty a breeze as I'd been in for some time. A living gale it was, a November no'wester—you know what that is, John Snow—but I'd all night been telling the crew to be careful, for a sea there was to sweep to eternity whoever it could 've caught loose around deck. I could 've hove her to and let her lay, but I was never one to heave to my vessel—not once I'd swung her off for home. And there, God help me, is maybe my weakness.

"She was under her gaff tops'l, but I see she couldn't stand it. 'Boys,' says I, 'clew up that tops'l.' Which they did, and put it in gaskets, and your Arthur, I mind, was one of the four men to go aloft to clew it up. Never a lad to shirk was Arthur. Well, a stouter craft of her tonnage than the *Arbiter* maybe never lived, nor no gear any sounder, but there are things o' God's

that the things o' man were never meant to hold out against. Her jib flew to ribbons. 'Cut it clear!' I says, and nigh half the crew jumped for'ard. Half a dozen of the crew to once, but Arthur—your Arthur, your boy, Mrs. Snow, your son, John Snow—he was quick enough to be among the half-dozen. Among a smart crew he was never left behind. It looked safe for us all then, coming on to morning, but who can ever tell? Fishermen's lives, they're expected to go fast, but they're men's lives for all that, and 'Have a care!' I called to them, myself to the wheel at the time, where, God knows, I was careful.

Well, I saw this big fellow coming, a mountain of water with a snow-white top to it against the first light of the morning. And I made to meet it. A better vessel than the *Arbiter* the hand o' man never turned out—all Gloucester knows that—but, her best and my best, there was no lifting her out of it. Like great pipe-organs aroaring this sea came, and over we went. Over we went, and I heard myself saying: 'God in heaven! You great old wagon, but are you gone at last?' And said it again when maybe there was a fathom of water over my head—her quarter was buried that deep and she that long coming up. Slow coming up she was, though up she came at last. But a man was gone."

He had stopped; but he went on. "It was Arthur, John Snow, and you, Mrs. Snow, who was gone. The boy you were expecting to see in this very room by now, he was gone. Little Arthur that ten years ago, when first I saw him, I could 've swung to the ceiling of this room with my one finger—little Arthur was gone. Well, 'Over with a dory!' I said. And, gale and all, we over with a dory, with three of us in it. We looked and looked in that terrible dawn, but no use—no man short o' the Son o' God himself could 'a' stayed afloat, oilskins and red jacks, in that sea. But we had to look, and coming aboard the dory was stove in—smashed, like 'twas a china teacup and not a new banker's double dory, against the rail. And it was cold. Our frost-bitten fingers slipped from her ice-wrapped rail, and the three of us nigh came to joining Arthur, and Lord knows—a sin, maybe you'll say, to think it, John Snow—but I felt then as if I'd just as soon, for it was a hard thing to see a man go down to his death, maybe through my foolishness. And to have the people that love him to face in the telling of it—that's hard, too."

He drew a great breath. "And"—again a deep breath and a

deepened note of pain—"that's what I've come to tell you, John Snow, and you, Mrs. Snow—how your boy Arthur was lost."

John Snow, at the kitchen table, I remember, one finger still in the pages of the black-lettered Bible he had been reading when Hugh Glynn stepped in, dropped his head on his chest and there let it rest. Mrs. Snow was crying out loud. Mary Snow said nothing, nor made a move, except to sit in her chair by the window and look to where, in the light of the kitchen lamp, Hugh Glynn stood.

There was a long quiet. Hugh Glynn spoke again. "Twenty years, John Snow, and you, Mrs. Snow—twenty good years I've been fishing out o' Gloucester, and in that time not much this side the western ocean I haven't laid a vessel's keel over. From Greenland to Hatteras I've fished, and many smart seamen I've been shipmates with—dory, bunk, and watch mates with in days gone by—and many a grand one of 'em I've known to find his grave under the green-white ocean, but never a smarter, never an abler fisherman than your boy Arthur. Boy and man I knew him, and, boy and man, he did his work. I thought you might like to hear that from me, John Snow. And not much more than that can I say now, except to add, maybe, that when the Lord calls, John Snow, we must go, all of us. The Lord called and Arthur went. He had a good life before him—if he'd lived. He'd 've had his own vessel soon—could 've had one before this—if he'd wanted. But 'No,' he says, 'I'll stay with you yet a while, Captain Hugh.' He loved me and I loved him. 'I'll stay with you yet a while, Captain Hugh,' he says, but, staying with me, he was lost, and if I was old enough to have a grown son o' my own, if 'twas that little lad who lived only long enough to teach me what it is to have hope of a fine son and then to lose him, if 'twas that little lad o' mine grown up, I doubt could I feel it more, John Snow."

John Snow let slip his book and stood up, and for the first time looked fair at Hugh Glynn. "We know, Captain Glynn," John Snow said, "and I'm thanking you now. It's hard on me, hard on us all—our only son, captain—our only child. But, doubtless, it had to come. Some goes young and some goes old. It came to him maybe earlier than we ever thought for, or he thought for, no doubt, but—it come. And what you have told us, captain, is something for a man to be hearing of his son—and to be hearing it from you. And only this very night, with

the word of you come home, my mind was hardening against you, Captain Glynn, for no denying I've heard hard things even as I've heard great things of you. But now I've met you, I know they mixed lies in the telling, Captain Glynn. And as for Arthur—" John Snow stopped.

"As for Arthur"—'twas something to listen to, the voice of Hugh Glynn then, so soft there was almost no believing it—"as for Arthur, John Snow, he went as all of us will have to go if we stop long enough with the fishing."

"Ay, no doubt. As you may go yourself, captain?"

"As I expect to go, John Snow. To be lost some day—what else should I look forward to?"

"A black outlook, captain."

"Maybe, maybe. And yet a man's death at the last."

"So 'tis, captain—so 'tis."

John Snow and Hugh Glynn gripped hands, looked into each other's eyes, and parted—Hugh Glynn out into the night again and John Snow, with Mrs. Snow, to their room, from where I could hear her sobbing. I almost wanted to cry myself, but Mary Snow was there. I went over and stood behind her. She was looking after some one through the window.

It was Hugh Glynn walking down the steep hill. Turning the corner below, I remember how he looked back and up at the window.

For a long silence Mary Snow sat there and looked out. When she looked up and noticed me, she said: "It's a hard life, the bank fishing, Simon. The long, long nights out to sea, the great gales; and when you come home, no face, it may be, at the door to greet you."

"That it is, Mary."

"I saw his wife one day, Simon," said Mary Snow softly, "and the little boy with her. But a week before they were killed together that was; six years ago, and he, the great, tall man, striding between them. A wonderful, lovely woman and a noble couple, I thought. And the grand boy! And I at that heedless age, Simon, it was a rare person, be it man or woman, I ran ahead to see again."

"Come from the window, Mary," I said to that, "and we'll talk of things more cheerful."

"No, no, Simon—don't ask me to talk of light matters to-night." With that and a "Good night" she left me for her room.

Out into the street I went. John Snow's house stood at the head of a street atop of a steep hill, and I remember how I stood on the steps of John Snow's house and looked down the slope of the hill, and below the hill to the harbor, and beyond the harbor to clear water. It was a cold winter moonlight, and under the moon the sea heaved and heaved and heaved. There was no break in the surface of that sea that night, but as it heaved, terribly slow and heavy, I thought I could feel the steps beneath me heaving with it.

III

All that night I walked the streets and roads of Cape Ann, walking where my eyes would lose no sight of that sea to which I had been born, and thinking, thinking, thinking always to the surge and roar of it; and in the morning I went down to where Hugh Glynn's vessel lay in dock; and Hugh Glynn himself I found standing on the string-piece, holding by the hand and feeding candy to the little son of one of his crew, the while half a dozen men were asking him, one after the other, for what I, too, had come to ask.

My turn came. "I never met you to speak to before, Captain Glynn," I began, "but I was a friend of Arthur Snow's, and I was hopeful for the chance to ship with you in Arthur's place."

"My name is Simon Kippen," I went on, when he made no answer. "I was in John Snow's kitchen when you came in last night."

"I know"—he waved the hand that wasn't holding the little boy—"I know. And"—he almost smiled—"you're not afraid to come to sea with me?"

"Why more afraid," I said, "than you to take me with you?"

"You were a great friend of Arthur?"

"A friend to Arthur—and more if I could," I answered.

He had a way of throwing his head back and letting his eyes look out, as from a distance, or as if he would take the measure of a man. 'Twas so he looked out at me now.

"He's a hard case of a man, shouldn't you say, Simon Kippen, who would play a shipmate foul?"

I said nothing to that.

"And, master or hand, we're surely all shipmates," he added; to which again I said nothing.

"Will you take Saul Haverick for dory mate?" he said again.

"I bear Saul Haverick no great love," I said; "but I have never heard he wasn't a good fisherman, and who should ask more than that of his mate in a dory?"

He looked out at me once more from the eyes that seemed so far back in his head; and from me he looked to the flag that was still to the half-mast of his vessel for the loss of Arthur Snow.

"We might ask something more in a dory mate at times, but he is a good fisherman," he answered at last. "A good hand to the wheel of a vessel, too, a cool head in danger, and one of the best judges of weather ever I sailed with. We're putting out in the morning. You can have the chance."

As to what was in my heart when I chose to ship with Hugh Glynn, I cannot say. There are those who tell us how they can explain every heart-beat, quick or slow, when aught ails them. I never could. I only know that standing on the steps of Mary Snow's house the night before, all my thought was of Mary Snow sitting at the window and looking down the street after Hugh Glynn. And "God help you, Simon Kippen!" I found myself saying—"it's not you, nor Saul Haverick, nor any other living man will marry Mary Snow while Hugh Glynn lives, for there is no striving against the strength of the sea, and the strength of Hugh Glynn is the strength of the sea." But of what lay beyond that in my heart I could not say.

And now I was to sea with Hugh Glynn, and we not four days out of Gloucester when, as if but to show me the manner of man he was, he runs clear to the head of Placentia Bay, in Newfoundland, for a baiting on our way to the banks; and whoever knows Placentia Bay knows what that means, with the steam-cutters of the Crown patrolling, and their sleepless watches night and day aloft, to trap whoever would try to buy a baiting there against the law.

No harm fell to Hugh Glynn that time. No harm ever fell to him, fishermen said. Before ever the cutters could get sight of him he had sight of them; and his bait stowed below, safe away he came, driving wild-like past the islands of the bay, with never a side-light showing in the night, and not the first time he had done so.

"What d'y' say to that, Simon? Didn't we fool 'em good?" he asked, when once more we were on the high seas and laying a free course for the western banks.

"I'm grateful you did not ask me to go in any dory to bring the bait off," I answered.

"Why is that, Simon?" he asked, as one who has no suspicion.

"It was against the law, Captain Glynn."

"But a bad law, Simon?"

"Law is law," I answered to that.

He walked from the wheel, where I was, twice to the break of the vessel and back again and said, in a voice no louder than was needful to be heard above what loose water was splashing over her quarter to my feet: "Don't be put out with me for what I'll tell you now, Simon. You're a good lad, Simon, and come of good people, but of people that for hundreds o' years have thought but one way in the great matters of life. And when men have lived with their minds set in the one way so long, Simon, it comes hard for them to understand any other way. Such unfrequent ones as differed from your people, Simon, them they cast out from among them. I know, I know, Simon, because I come from people something like to them, only I escaped before it was too late to understand that people who split tacks with you do not always do it to fetch up on a lee shore."

"And from those other people, no doubt, Captain Glynn, you learned it was right to break a country's laws?"

"It wasn't breaking our country's law, Simon, nor any good man's law, to get a baiting last night. There are a lot of poor fishermen, Simon—as none know better than yourself—in Placentia Bay who have bait to sell, and there is a law which says they must not. But whose law? An American law? No. God's law? No. The law of those poor people in Placentia Bay? No. Some traders who have the making of the laws? Yes. And there you have it. If the Placentia Bay fishermen aren't allowed to sell bait to me, or the like of me, they will have to sell it to the traders themselves, but have to take their one dollar, where we of Gloucester would pay them five, and, paying it, would give some of them and their families a chance to live."

He stood there in his rubber boots to his hips and his long greatcoat to his ankles—he was one who never wore oilskins aboard ship—swinging with the swing of the plunging vessel as if he was built into her, and with his head thrown back and a smile, it may be, that was not a smile at all, and kept looking at me from out of eyes that were changeable as the sea itself.

"Don't you be getting mad with me, Simon, because we don't

think alike in some things. To the devil with what people think of you—I've said that often enough, Simon, but not when they're good people. If some people don't like us, Simon there will come no nourishment to our souls. Some day you're going to come to my way o' thinking, Simon, because we two are alike underneath."

"Alike!" I smiled to myself.

"Ay, alike at heart, Simon. We may look to be sailing wide apart courses now, but maybe if our papers were examined 'twould be found we'd cleared for the same last port of call, Simon."

And no more talk of anything like that between us until the night before we were to leave the fishing grounds for home. In the afternoon we had set our trawls, and, leaving the vessel, the skipper had said, "Our last set, boys. Let 'em lay to-night, and in the morning we'll haul"; and, returning aboard after setting, we had our supper and were making ready, such as had no watch to stand, to turn in for a good, long sleep against the labor of the morrow.

It was an oily sea that evening—a black, oily-smooth surface, lifting heavy and slow to a long swell. A smooth oily sea—there is never any good comes out of it; but a beautiful sea notwithstanding with more curious patterns of shifting colors than a man could count in a year playing atop of it. The colors coming and going and rolling and squirming—no women's shop ashore ever held such colors under the bright night-lights as under the low sun we saw this night on the western banks. It was a most beautiful and a most wicked sea to stop and look at.

And the sun went down that evening on a banking of clouds no less beautiful; a copper-red sun, and after 'twas gone, in lovely massy forms and splendid colors, were piled the clouds in all the western quarter.

Such of the crew as stopped to speak of it did not like at all the look of that sea and sky, and some stopped beside the skipper to say it, he leaning against the main rigging in the way he had the while he would be studying the weather signs; but he made no answer to the crew, to that of any other word they had this evening—except to Saul Haverick, and to him only when he came up from supper complaining of not feeling well.

He was one could drive his crew till they could not see for very weariness; but he was one could nurse them, too. "Go below and turn in," was his word to Saul, "and stay there till you feel better. Call me, Simon, if I'm not up," he then said to me. "I'll stand Saul's watch with you, if Saul is no better."

It was yet black night when I was called to go on watch, and, Saul Haverick still complaining, I went to call the skipper. But he was already up and had been, the watch before me said, for the better part of the night. I found him leaning over the gunnels of the wind'ard nest of dories when I went on deck, gazing out on a sea that was no longer oily-smooth, though smooth enough, too, what was to be seen of it under the stars of a winter night.

I stood on the break and likewise looked about me. To anchor, and alone, lay the vessel, with but her riding-light to mark her in the dark; alone and quiet, with never a neighbor to hail us, nor a sound from any living thing whatever. The very gulls themselves were asleep; only the fores'l, swaying to a short sheet, would roll part way to wind'ard and back to loo'ard, but quiet as could be even then, except for the little tapping noises of the reef-points when in and out the belly of the canvas would puff full up and let down again to what little wind was stirring.

It was a perfect, calm night, but no calm day was to follow. "Wicked weather ahead," said Hugh Glynn, and came and stood beside me on the break. "A wicked day coming, but no help for it now till daylight comes to see our trawls to haul 'em." And, as one who had settled that in his mind, he said no more of it, but from mainm'st to weather rail he paced, and back again, and I took to pacing beside him.

A wonderful time, the night-watches at sea, for men to reveal themselves. Night and sky overhead and the wide ocean to your elbow—it drives men to thought of higher things. The wickedest of men—I have known them, with all manner of blasphemies befouling their lips by day, to become holy as little children in the watches of the night.

No blasphemer was Hugh Glynn, nor did the night hold terror for him; only as we paced the break together he spoke of matters that but himself and his God could know. It was hard to listen and be patient, though maybe it was as much of wonder as of impatience that was taking hold of me as I listened.

"Do you never fear what men might come to think of you, Captain Glynn," I said, "confessing your very soul?"

"Ho, ho, that's it, is it?" He came to a sudden stop in our walking. "I should only confess the body—is that it, Simon Kippen? And, of course, when a man confesses to one thing of his own free will, you know there must be something worse behind?

Is that it, Simon?" He chuckled beside me and, as if only to scandalize me, let his tongue run wilder yet.

His tales were of violations of laws such as it had been my religion to observe since I was a boy, and little except of the comic, ridiculous side of them all. The serious matters of life, if 'twas to judge by what he spoke to me that night, had small interest for him. But the queer power of the man! Had it been light where he could see me, I would have choked before ever I would let him hear me laugh; but he caught me smiling and straightened up, chuckling, to say: "Many other things you would smile at, too, Simon, if your bringing up would but allow the frost to thaw from your soul."

"And are reckless carryings-on and desperate chancing things to smile at?"

"O Simon, Simon, what a righteous man you're to be that never expects to see the day when no harbor this side of God's eternal sea will offer you the only safe and quiet mooring!"

Again I saw Mary Snow sitting at the window and looking down the street, and remembering how she had spoken of his lonely home, I said: "No doubt a man, like a vessel, Captain Glynn, should have always a mooring somewhere. A wonder you never thought of marrying again?"

"I have thought of it."

"And with some one woman in mind?"

"It may be." He answered that, too, without a pause.

"And does she know?"

"It may be she knows. No knowing when they know, Simon. As men best understand the soul, so it is woman's best gift to understand the heart. But no fair play in me to ask her. I've had my great hour, and may not have it again with another. To offer the woman I have in mind anything less than a great love—it would be to cheat, Simon. No, no, no—it's not the kind of a man I am now, but the kind you are, Simon, should marry."

"It's not my kind that women like best, captain," I said.

"There are women to like every kind, Simon, and almost any kind of a woman would like your kind, Simon, if you would only learn to be less ashamed of what should be no shame. And it is you, already in love, who——"

"Me—in love?" I was like a vessel luffing to escape a squall, he had come on me so quickly.

"There it is, Simon—the upbringing of you that would never own up to what you think only yourself know. Three weeks to sea now you've been with me, and never a gull you've seen skirling to the west'ard that your eyes haven't followed. By no mistake do you watch them flying easterly. And when last evening I said, 'To-morrow, boys, we'll swing her off and drive her to the west'ard—to the west'ard and Gloucester!' the leaping heart in you drove the blood to your very eyes. Surely that was not in sorrow, Simon?"

I made no answer.

Back and forth we paced, and talked as we paced, until the stars were dimming in the sky and the darkness fading from the sea. He stopped by the rail and stared, aweary-like, I thought, upon the waters.

"Simon, surely few men but would rather be themselves than anybody else that lives; but surely, too, no man sailing his own wide courses but comes to the day when he wishes he'd been less free in his navigation at times. You are honest and right, Simon. Even when you are wrong you are right, because for a man to do what he thinks is right, whether he be right or wrong, at the time, is to come to be surely right in the end. And it is the like of you, not yet aweary in soul or body, should mate with the women moulded of God to be the great mothers."

"You have done much thinking of some matters, captain," I said, not knowing what else to say.

"Alone at sea before the dawn—it is a wonderful hour for a man to cross-question himself, Simon; and not many nights of late years that I haven't seen the first light of dawn creeping up over the edge of the ocean. You marry Mary Snow, Simon."

He knew. What could I say? "I never thought to talk like this, captain, to a living man." In the growing light we now stood plain to each other's sight. "I don't understand what made me," I said, and said it, doubtless, with a note of shame.

"It may be just as well at your age that you don't understand every feeling that drives you on, Simon. Our brains grow big with age, but not our hearts. No matter what made you talk to-night, Simon, you marry Mary Snow."

I shook my head, but opened my heart to him, nevertheless. "I haven't the clever ways of Saul Haverick."

"Simon, it's my judgment this night that Mary Snow will never marry Saul Haverick."

"I'm glad to hear you think that, captain. 'Twould spoil her life—or any woman's."

"No, no," he said, quick-like. Almost any woman's—yes; but not Mary Snow's—not altogether."

"And why?"

"Because she's too strong a soul to be spoiled of her life by any one man; because no matter what man she marries, in her heart will be the image, not of the man her husband is, but of the man she'd wish him to be, and in the image of that man of her fancy will her children be born. Women moulded of God to be the mothers of great men are fashioned that way, Simon. They dream great dreams for their children's sake to come, and their hearts go out to the man who helps to make their dreams come true. If I've learned anything of good women in life, Simon, it is that. And, no saying, I may be wrong in that, too, Simon, but so far I've met no man who knows more of it than I to gainsay me. You marry Mary Snow, Simon, and she will bear you children who will bring new light to a darkening world."

The dawn was rolling up to us and the next on watch was on deck to relieve me; and the cook, too, with his head above the fo'c's'le hatch, was calling that breakfast was ready, and we said no more of that.

"Go, for'ard, Simon," said Captain Glynn, "and have your breakfast. After breakfast we'll break out her anchor, and out dories and get that gear aboard afore it's too late. I'll go below and see how Saul's getting on."

With that he went into the cabin; but soon was back to take his seat at the breakfast table; but no word of Saul until we had done eating, and he standing to go up on deck. Then he said: "Saul says he is still too sick to go in the dory with you, Simon."

And to that I said: "Well, I've hauled a halibut trawl single-handed before, Captain Glynn, and I can do it again if need be."

He put on his woollen cap, and across the table he looked at me, and I looked hard at him.

"This will be no morning to go single-handed in a dory, Simon. Saul is not too sick, he says, to stand to the wheel and handle the vessel in my place. I will take his place along with you in the dory."

What he was thinking I could not say. His head was thrown back and his eyes looking out and down at me, as from the top

of a far-away hill, and no more knowing what thoughts lay behind them than what ships lay beyond the horizon.

IV

It was a blood-red sunrise and a sea that was making when we left the vessel, but nothing to worry over in that. It might grow into a dory-killing day later, but so far it was only what all winter trawlers face more days than they can remember.

We picked up our nearest buoy, with its white-and-black flag floating high to mark it, and as we did, to wind'ard of us we could see, for five miles it might be, the twisted lines of the dories stretching. Rising to the top of a sea we could see them, sometimes one and sometimes another, lifting and falling, and the vessel lifting and falling to wind'ard of them all.

Hugh Glynn took the bow to do the hauling and myself the waist for coiling, and it was a grand sight to see him heave in on that heavy gear on that December morning. Many men follow the sea, but not many are born to it. Hugh Glynn was. Through the gurdy he hauled the heavy lines, swinging forward his shoulders, first one and then the other, swaying from his waist and all in time to the heave of the sea beneath him, and singing, as he heaved, the little snatches of songs that I believe he made up as he went along.

As he warmed to his work he stopped to draw off the heavy sweater that he wore over his woollen shirt, and made as if to throw it in the bow of the dory. "But no," he said, "it will get wet there. You put it on you, Simon, and keep it dry for me." He was a full size bigger than me in every way, and I put it on, over my cardigan jacket and under my oil jacket, and it felt fine and comfortable on me.

It came time for me to spell him on the hauling, but he waved me back. "Let be, let be, Simon," he said, "it's fine light exercise for a man of a brisk morning. It's reminding me of my hauling of my first trawl on the Banks. Looking back on it, now, Simon, I mind how the bravest sight I thought I ever saw was our string of dories racing afore the tide in the sea of that sunny winter's morning, and the vessel, like a mother to her little boats, standing off and on to see that nothing happened the while we hauled and coiled and gaffed inboard the broad-backed halibut. All out of myself with pride I was—I that was no more than a lad, but

hauling halibut trawls with full-grown Gloucester men on the Grand Banks! And the passage home that trip, Simon! Oh, boy, that passage home!"

Without even a halt in his heaving in of the trawls, he took to singing:

"It came one day, as it had to come—
I said to you 'Good-by.'
'Good luck,' said you, 'and a fair, fair wind'—
Though you cried as if to die;
Was all there was ahead of you
When we put out to sea;
But now, sweetheart, we're headed home
To the west'ard and to thee.

"So blow, ye devils, and walk her home—
For she's the able *Lucy Foster.*
The woman I love is waiting me,
So drive the *Lucy* home to Gloucester.
O ho ho for this heaven-sent breeze,
Straight from the east and all you please!
Come along now, ye whistling gales,
The harder ye blow the faster she sails—
O my soul, there's a girl in Gloucester!"

He stopped to look over his shoulder at me. "Simon, boy, I mind the days when there was no stopping the songs in me. Rolling to my lips o' themselves they would come, like foam to the crests of high seas. The days of a man's youth, Simon! All I knew of a gale of wind was that it stirred the fancies in me. It's the most wonderful thing will ever happen you, Simon."

"What is, skipper?"

"Why, the loving a woman and she loving you, and you neither knowing why, nor maybe caring."

"No woman loves me, skipper."

"She will, boy—never a fear."

He took to the hauling, and soon again to the singing:

"My love comes running down the street,
And what says he to me?
Says he, 'O dadda, dadda,
And you're back again from sea!

"'And did you ketch a great big fish
And bring him home to me?
O dadda, dadda, take me up
And toss me high!' says he.

"My love looks out on the stormy morn,
Her thoughts are on the sea.
She says, 'Tis wild upon the Banks,'
And kneels in prayer for me.

"'O Father, hold him safe!' she prays,
'And——'

"There's one, Simon!" he called.

A bad sea he meant. They had been coming and going, coming and going, rolling under and past us, and so far no harm; but this was one more wicked to look at than its mates. So I dropped the coiling lines and, with the oar already to the becket in the stern, whirled the dory's bow head on. The sea carried us high and far and, passing, left the dory deep with water, but no harm in that so she was still right side up.

"A good job, Simon," said Hugh Glynn the while we were bailing. "Not too soon and not too late."

That was the first one. More followed in their turn; but always the oar was handy in the becket, and it was but to whirl bow or stern to it with the oar when it came, not too soon to waste time for the hauling but never, of course, too late to save capsizing; and bailing her out, if need be, when it was by.

Our trawl was in, our fish in the waist of the dory, and we lay to our roding line and second anchor, so we might not drift miles to loo'ard while waiting for the vessel to pick us up. We could see the vessel—to her hull, when to the top of a sea we rose together; but nothing of her at all when into the hollows we fell together.

She had picked up all but the dory next to wind'ard of us. We would be the last, but before long now she would be to us. "When you drop Simon and me, go to the other end of the line and work back. Pick Simon and me up last of all," Hugh Glynn had said to Saul, and I remember how Saul, standing to the wheel, looked down over the taffrail and said, "Simon and you last of all," and nodded his head as our dory fell away in the vessel's wake.

Tide and sea were such that there was no use trying to row

against it, or we would not have waited at all; but we waited, and as we waited the wind, which had been southerly, went into the east and snow fell; but for not more than a half-hour, when it cleared. We stood up and looked about us. There was no vessel or other dory in sight.

We said no word to each other of it, but the while we waited further, all the while with a wind'ard eye to the bad little seas, we talked.

"Did you ever think of dying, Simon?" Hugh Glynn said after a time.

"Can a man follow the winter trawling long and not think of it at times?" I answered.

"And have you fear of it, Simon?"

"I know I have no love for it," I said. "But do you ever think of it, Hugh?"

"I do—often. With the double tides working to draw me to it, it would be queer enough if now and again I did not think of it."

"And have you fear of it?"

"Of not going properly—I have, Simon." And after a little: "And I've often thought it a pity for a man to go and nothing come of his going. Would you like the sea for a grave, Simon?"

"I would not," I answered.

"Nor me, Simon. A grand, clean grave, the ocean, and there was a time I thought I would; but not now. The green grave ashore, with your own beside you—a man will feel less lonesome, or so I've often thought, Simon.

"I've often thought so," he went on, his eyes now on watch for the bad seas and again looking wistful-like at me. "I'd like to lie where my wife and boy lie, she to one side and the lad to the other, and rise with them on Judgment Day. I've a notion, Simon, that with them to bear me up I'd stand afore the Lord with greater courage. For if what some think is true—that it's those we've loved in this world will have the right to plead for us in the next—then, Simon, there will be two to plead for me as few can plead."

He stood up and looked around.

"It is a bad sea now, but worse later, and a strong breeze brewing, Simon"; and drew from an inside pocket of his woollen shirt a small leather notebook. He held it up for me to see, with the slim little pencil held by little loops along the edges.

" 'Twas hers. I've a pocket put in every woollen shirt I wear

to sea so 'twill be close to me. There's things in it she wrote of our little boy. And I'm writing here something I'd like you to be witness to, Simon."

He wrote a few lines. "There, Simon. I've thought often this trip how 'tis hard on John Snow at his age to have to take to fishing again. If I hadn't lost Arthur, he wouldn't have to. I'm willing my vessel to John Snow. Will you witness it, Simon?"

I signed my name below his; and he set the book back in his inside pocket.

"And you think our time is come, skipper?" I tried to speak quietly, too.

"I won't say that, Simon, but foolish not to make ready for it."

I looked about when we rose to the next sea for the vessel. But no vessel. I thought it hard. "Had you no distrust of Saul Haverick this morning?" I asked him.

"I had. And last night, too, Simon."

"And you trusted him?"

"A hard world if we didn't trust people, Simon. I thought it over again this morning and was ashamed, Simon, to think it in me to distrust a shipmate. I wouldn't believed it of any man ever I sailed with. But no use to fool ourselves longer. Make ready. Over with the fish, over with the trawls, over with everything but thirty or forty fathoms of that roding line, and the sail, and one anchor, and the two buoys."

It was hard to have to throw back in the sea the fine fish that we'd taken hours to set and haul for; hard, too, to heave over the stout gear that had taken so many long hours to rig. But there was no more time to waste—over they went. And we took the two buoys—light-made but sound and tight half-barrels they were—and we lashed them to the risings of the dory.

"And now the sail to her, Simon."

We put the sail to her.

"And stand by to cut clear our anchorage!" I stood by with my bait knife; and when he called out, I cut, and away we went racing before wind and tide; me in the waist on, the buoy lashed to the wind'ard side, to hold her down, and he on the wind'ard gunnel, too, but aft, with an oar in one hand and the sheet of the sail in the other.

"And where now?" I asked, when the wind would let me.

"The lee of Sable Island lies ahead."

The full gale was on us now—a living gale; and before the gale

the sea ran higher than ever, and before the high seas the flying dory. Mountains of slate-blue water rolled down into valleys, and the valleys rolled up into mountains again, and all shifting so fast that no man might point a finger and say, "Here's one, there's one!"—quick and wild as that they were.

From one great hill we would tumble only to fall into the next great hollow; and never did she make one of her wild plunges but the spume blew wide and high over her, and never did she check herself for even the quickest of breaths, striving the while to breast up the side of a mountain of water, but the sea would roll over her, and I'd say to myself once again: "Now at last we're gone!"

We tumbled into the hollows and a roaring wind would drive a boiling foam, white as milk, atop of us; we climbed up the hills and the roaring wind would drive the solid green water atop of us. Wind, sea, and milk-white foam between them—they seemed all of a mind to smother us. These things I saw in jumps-like. Lashed to the wind'ard buoy I was by a length of roding line, to my knees in water the better part of the time, and busy enough with the bailing. There was no steady looking to wind'ard, such was the weight of the bullets of water which the wild wind drove off the sea crests; but a flying glance now and again kept me in the run of it.

I would have wished to be able to do my share of the steering, but only Hugh Glynn could properly steer that dory that day. The dory would have sunk a hundred times only for the buoys in the waist; but she would have capsized more times than that again only for the hand of him in the stern. Steady he sat, a man of marble, his jaw like a cliff rising above the collar of his woollen shirt, his two eyes like two lights glowing out from under his cap brim.

And yet for all of him I couldn't see how we could live through it. Once we were so terribly beset that, "We'll be lost carrying sail like this, Hugh Glynn!" I called back to him.

And he answered: "I never could see any difference myself, Simon, between being lost carrying sail and being lost hove to."

After that I said no more.

And so, to what must have been the wonder of wind and sea that day, Hugh Glynn drove the little dory into the night and the lee of Sable Island.

V

We took in our sail and let go our anchor. Hugh Glynn looked long above and about him. "A clear night coming, Simon; and cold, with the wind backing into the no'west. We'll lay here, for big vessels will be running for this same lee to-night, and maybe a chance for us to be picked up with the daylight. Did I do well this day by you, Simon?"

"I'd be a lost man hours back but for you," I said, and was for saying more in praise of him, but he held up his hand.

"So you don't hold me a reckless, desperate sail carrier, Simon, never mind the rest." His eyes were shining. "But your voice is weary, Simon, and you're hungry, too, I know."

I was hungry and worn—terribly worn—after the day, and so told him.

"Then lie down and 'twill rest you, and for a time make you forget the hunger. And while you're lying down, Simon, I'll stand watch."

And I made ready to lie down, when I thought of his sweater I was wearing. I unbuttoned my oil jacket to get at it. "It's colder already, skipper, and you will be needing it."

"No, it is you will be needing it, Simon. Being on my feet, d'y' see, I can thrash around and keep warm."

"But will you call me and take it if it grows too cold, skipper?"

"I'll call you when I want it—lie down now."

"A wonderful calm night, full as quiet as last night, skipper," I said, "only no harm in this night—no gale before us on the morrow."

"No, Simon," he said—"naught but peace before us. But lie down you, boy."

"And you'll call me, skipper," I said, "when my watch comes?"

"I'll call you when I've stood my full watch. Lie down now."

I lay down, meaning to keep awake. But I fell asleep.

I thought I felt a hand wrapping something around me in the night, and I made to sit up, but a voice said, "Lie down, boy," and I lay down and went to sleep again.

When I awoke it was to the voices of strange men, and one was saying. "He will be all right now."

I sat up. I was still in the dory, and saw men standing over me; and other men were looking down from a vessel's side. Ice was thick on the rail of the vessel.

It was piercing cold and I was weak with the fire of the pains running through my veins, but remembering, I tried to stand up. "Hsh-h, boy!" they said, "you are all right," and would have held me down while they rubbed my feet and hands.

I stood up among them, nevertheless, and looked for Hugh Glynn. He was on the after thwart, his arms folded over the gunnel and his forehead resting on his arms. His woollen shirt was gone from him. I looked back and in the waist of the dory I saw it, where they had taken it off me; and the sail of the boat he had wrapped around me, too; and his woollen mitts.

I lifted his head to see his face. If ever a man smiled, 'twas he was smiling as I looked. "Skipper! O skipper!" I called out; and again: "O skipper!"

One of the men who had been rubbing my feet touched my shoulder. "Come away, boy; the voice o' God called him afore you."

And so Hugh Glynn came to his green grave ashore; and so I came home to marry Mary Snow; and in the end to father the children which may or may not grow great as he predicted. But great in the eyes of the world they could become, greater than all living men, it might be, and yet fall far short in our eyes of the stature of the man who thought that 'twas better for one to live than for two to die, and that one not to be himself.

Desperate he was and lawbreaking, for law is law, whosoever it bears hard upon; but the heart was warm within him. And if my children have naught else, and it is for their mother and me to say, the heart to feel for others they shall have; and having that, the rest may follow or not, as it will; which would be Hugh Glynn's way of it, too, I think.

THE BRUTE[1]

By JOSEPH CONRAD

DODGING in from the rain-swept street, I exchanged a smile and a glance with Miss Blank in the bar of the Three Crows. This exchange was effected with extreme propriety. It is a shock to think that, if still alive, Miss Blank must be something over sixty now. How time passes!

Noticing my gaze directed inquiringly at the partition of glass and varnished wood, Miss Blank was good enough to say, encouragingly:

"Only Mr. Jermyn and Mr. Stonor in the parlour, with another gentleman I've never seen before."

I moved toward the parlour door. A voice discoursing on the other side (it was but a matchboard partition) rose so loudly that the concluding words became quite plain in all their atrocity.

"That fellow Wilmot fairly dashed her brains out, and a good job, too!"

This inhuman sentiment, since there was nothing profane or improper in it, failed to do as much as to check the slight yawn Miss Blank was achieving behind her hand. And she remained gazing fixedly at the window-panes, which streamed with rain.

As I opened the parlour door the same voice went on in the same cruel strain:

"I was glad when I heard she got the knock from somebody at last. Sorry enough for poor Wilmot, though. That man and I used to be chums at one time. Of course that was the end of him. A clear case if there ever was one. No way out of it. None at all."

The voice belonged to the gentleman Miss Blank had never seen before. He straddled his long legs on the hearthrug Jermyn, leaning forward, held his pocket-handkerchief spread out before the grate. He looked back dismally over his shoulder, and as I slipped behind one of the little wooden tables, I nodded to him.

[1] From *A Set of Six*, by Joseph Conrad, published by Doubleday, Page and Co., 1915. Reprinted by permission of James B. Pinker and Son, Inc., Agents.

On the other side of the fire, imposingly calm and large, sat Mr. Stonor, jammed tight into a capacious Windsor armchair. There was nothing small about him but his short, white side-whiskers. Yards and yards of extra superfine blue cloth (made up into an overcoat) reposed on a chair by his side. And he must just have brought some liner from sea, because another chair was smothered under his black waterproof, ample as a pall, and made of three-fold oiled silk, double-stitched throughout. A man's hand-bag of the usual size looked like a child's toy on the floor near his feet.

I did not nod to him. He was too big to be nodded to in that parlour. He was a senior Trinity pilot and condescended to take his turn in the cutter only during the summer months. He had been many times in charge of royal yachts in and out of Port Victoria. Besides, it's no use nodding to a monument. And he was like one. He didn't speak, he didn't budge. He just sat there, holding his handsome old head up, immovable, and almost bigger than life. It was extremely fine. Mr. Stonor's presence reduced poor old Jermyn to a mere shabby wisp of a man, and made the talkative stranger in tweeds on the hearthrug look absurdly boyish. The last must have been a few years over thirty, and was certainly not the sort of individual that gets abashed at the sound of his own voice, because gathering me in, as it were, by a friendly glance, he kept it going without a check.

"I was glad of it," he repeated emphatically. "You may be surprised at it, but then you haven't gone through the experience I've had of her. I can tell you, it was something to remember. Of course I got off scot free myself—as you can see. She did her best to break up my pluck for me though. She jolly near drove as fine a fellow as ever lived into a madhouse. What do you say to that—eh?"

Not an eyelid twitched in Mr. Stonor's enormous face. Monumental! The speaker looked straight into my eyes.

"It used to make me sick to think of her going about the world murdering people."

Jermyn approached the handkerchief a little nearer to the grate and groaned. It was simply a habit he had.

"I've seen her once," he declared, with mournful indifference. "She had a house——"

The stranger in tweeds turned to stare down at him surprised.

"She had three houses," he corrected authoritatively. But Jermyn was not to be contradicted.

"She had a house, I say," he repeated, with dismal obstinacy. "A great, big, ugly, white thing. You could see it from miles away—sticking up."

"So you could," assented the other readily. "It was old Colchester's notion, though he was always threatening to give her up. He couldn't stand her racket any more, he declared; it was too much of a good thing for him; he would wash his hands of her, if he never got hold of another—and so on. I daresay he would have chucked her, only—it may surprise you—his missus wouldn't hear of it. Funny, eh? But with women, you never know how they will take a thing, and Mrs. Colchester, with her moustaches and big eyebrows, set up for being as strong-minded as they make them. She used to walk about in a brown silk dress, with a great gold cable flopping about her bosom. You should have heard her snapping out: 'Rubbish!' or 'Stuff and nonsense!' I daresay she knew when she was well off. They had no children, and had never set up a home anywhere. When in England she just made shift to hang out anyhow in some cheap hotel or boarding-house. I daresay she liked to get back to the comforts she was used to. She knew very well she couldn't gain by any change. And, moreover, Colchester, though a first-rate man, was not what you may call in his first youth, and, perhaps, she may have thought that he wouldn't be able to get hold of another (as he used to say) so easily. Anyhow, for one reason or another, it was 'Rubbish' and 'Stuff and nonsense' for the good lady. I overheard once young Mr. Apse himself say to her confidentially: 'I assure you, Mrs. Colchester, I am beginning to feel quite unhappy about the name she's getting for herself.' 'Oh,' says she, with her deep little hoarse laugh, 'if one took notice of all the silly talk,' and she showed Apse all her ugly false teeth at once. 'It would take more than that to make me lose my confidence in her, I assure you,' says she."

At this point, without any change of facial expression, Mr. Stonor emitted a short sardonic laugh. It was very impressive, but I didn't see the fun. I looked from one to another. The stranger on the hearthrug had an ugly smile.

"And Mr. Apse shook both Mrs. Colchester's hands, he was so pleased to hear a good word said for their favourite. All these Apses, young and old, you know, were perfectly infatuated with that abominable, dangerous——"

"I beg your pardon," I interrupted, exasperated, for he seemed

to be addressing himself exclusively to me, "but who on earth have you been talking about?"

"I am talking of the Apse family," he answered, courteously.

I nearly let out a damn at this. But just then the respected Miss Blank put her head in, and said that the cab was at the door, if Mr. Stonor wanted to catch the eleven-three up.

At once the senior pilot arose in his mighty bulk and began to struggle into his coat, with awe-inspiring upheavals. The stranger and I hurried impulsively to his assistance, and directly we laid our hands on him he became perfectly quiescent. We had to raise our arms very high, and to make efforts. It was like caparisoning a docile elephant. With a "Thanks, gentlemen," he dived under and squeezed himself through the door in a great hurry.

We smiled at each other in a friendly way.

"I wonder how he manages to hoist himself up a ship's side-ladder," said the man in tweeds; and poor Jermyn, who was a mere North Sea pilot, without official status or recognition of any sort, pilot only by courtesy, groaned.

"He makes eight hundred a year."

"Are you a sailor?" I asked the stranger, who had gone back to his position on the rug.

"I used to be till a couple of years ago, when I got married," answered this communicative individual. "I even went to sea first in that very ship we were speaking of when you came in."

"What ship?" I asked, puzzled. "I never heard you mention a ship."

"I've just told you her name, my dear sir," he replied. "The *Apse Family*. Surely you've heard of the great firm of Apse & Sons, shipowners. They had a pretty big fleet. There was the *Lucy Apse,* and the *Harold Apse,* and *Anne, John, Malcolm, Clara, Juliet,* and so on—no end of *Apses*. Every brother, sister, aunt, cousin, wife—and grandmother, too, for all I know—of the firm had a ship named after them. Good, solid, old-fashioned craft they were, too, built to carry and to last. None of your new-fangled, labour-saving appliances in them, but plenty of men and plenty of good salt beef and hard tack put aboard—and off you go to fight your way out and home again."

The miserable Jermyn made a sound of approval, which sounded like a groan of pain. Those were the ships for him. He pointed out in doleful tones that you couldn't say to labour-saving appli-

ances: "Jump lively now, my hearties." No labour-saving appliance would go aloft on a dirty night with the sands under your lee.

"No," asserted the stranger, with a wink at me. "The Apses didn't believe in them, either, apparently. They treated their people well—as people don't get treated nowadays—and they were awfully proud of their ships. Nothing ever happened to them. This last one, the *Apse Family*, was to be like the others, only she was to be still stronger, still safer, still more roomy and comfortable. I believe they meant her to last forever. They had her built composite—iron, teak-wood, and greenheart, and her scantling was something fabulous. If ever an order was given for a ship in a spirit of pride this one was. Everything of the best. The commodore captain of the employ was to command her, and they planned the accommodation for him like a house on shore under a big, tall poop that went nearly to the mainmast. No wonder Mrs. Colchester wouldn't let the old man give her up. Why, it was the best home she ever had in all her married days. She had a nerve, that woman.

"The fuss that was made while that ship was building! Let's have this a little stronger, and that a little heavier; and hadn't that other thing better be changed for something a little thicker. The builders entered into the spirit of the game, and there she was, growing into the clumsiest, heaviest ship of her size right before all their eyes, without anybody getting aware of it somehow. She was to be 2,000 tons register, or a little over; no less on any account. But see what happens. When they come to measure her she turned out 1,999 tons and a fraction. General consternation! And they say old Mr. Apse was so annoyed, when they told him, that he took to his bed and died. The old gentleman had retired from the firm twenty-five years before, and was ninety-six years old if a day, so his death wasn't, perhaps, so surprising. Still Mr. Lucian Apse was convinced that his father would have lived to a hundred. So we may put him at the head of the list. Next comes the poor devil of a shipwright that brute caught and squashed as she went off the ways. They called it the launch of a ship, but I've heard people say that, from the wailing and yelling and scrambling out of the way, it was more like letting the devil loose upon the river. She snapped all her checks like pack-thread, and went for the tugs in attendance like a fury. Before anybody could see what she was

up to she sent one of them to the bottom, and laid up another for three months' repairs. One of her cables parted, and then, suddenly—you couldn't tell why—she let herself be brought up with the other as quiet as a lamb.

"That's how she was. You could never be sure what she would be up to next. There are ships difficult to handle, but generally you can depend on them behaving rationally. With *that* ship, whatever you did with her you never knew how it would end. She was a wicked beast. Or, perhaps, she was only just insane."

He uttered this supposition in so earnest a tone that I could not refrain from smiling. He left off biting his lower lip to apostrophize me.

"Eh! Why not? Why couldn't there be something in her build, in the lines corresponding to—what's madness? Only something just a tiny bit wrong in the make of your brain. Why shouldn't there be a mad ship—I mean mad in a ship-like way, so that under no circumstances could you be sure she would do what any other sensible ship would naturally do for you. There are ships that steer wildly, and ships that can't be quite trusted always to stay; others want careful watching when running in a gale; and again, there may be a ship that will make heavy weather of it in every little blow. But then you expect her to be always so. You take it as part of her character, as a ship, just as you take account of a man's peculiarities of temper when you deal with him. But with her you couldn't. She was unaccountable. If she wasn't mad, then she was the most evil-minded, underhand, savage brute that ever went afloat. I've seen her run in a heavy gale beautifully for two days, and on the third broach to twice in the same afternoon. The first time she flung the helmsman clean over the wheel, but as she didn't quite manage to kill him she had another try about three hours afterward. She swamped herself fore and aft, burst all the canvas we had set, scared all hands into a panic, and even frightened Mrs. Colchester down there in these beautiful stern cabins that she was so proud of. When we mustered the crew there was one man missing. Swept overboard, of course, without being either seen or heard, poor devil! and I only wonder more of us didn't go.

"Always something like that. Always. I heard an old mate tell Captain Colchester once that it had come to this with him, that he was afraid to open his mouth to give any sort of order.

She was as much of a terror in harbour as at sea. You could never be certain what would hold her. On the slightest provocation she would start snapping ropes, cables, wire hawsers, like carrots. She was heavy, clumsy, unhandy—but that does not quite explain that power for mischief she had. You know, somehow, when I think of her I can't help remembering what we hear of incurable lunatics breaking loose now and then."

He looked at me inquisitively. But, of course, I couldn't admit that a ship could be mad.

"In the ports where she was known," he went on, "they dreaded the sight of her. She thought nothing of knocking away twenty feet or so of solid stone facing off a quay or wiping off the end of a wooden wharf. She must have lost miles of chain and hundreds of tons of anchors in her time. When she fell aboard some poor unoffending ship it was the very devil of a job to haul her off again. And she never got hurt herself—just a few scratches or so, perhaps. They had wanted to have her strong. And so she was. Strong enough to ram Polar ice with. And as she began so she went on. From the day she was launched she never let a year pass without murdering somebody. I think the owners got very worried about it. But they were a stiff-necked generation, all these Apses; they wouldn't admit there could be anything wrong with the *Apse Family*. They wouldn't even change her name. 'Stuff and nonsense,' as Mrs. Colchester used to say. They ought at least to have shut her up for life in some dry dock or other, away up the river, and never let her smell salt water again. I assure you, my dear sir, that she invariably did kill some one every voyage she made. It was perfectly well known. She got a name for it, far and wide."

I expressed my surprise that a ship with such a deadly reputation could ever get a crew.

"Then, you don't know what sailors are, my dear sir. Let me just show you by an instance. One day in dock at home, while loafing on the forecastle head, I noticed two respectable salts come along, one a middle-aged, competent, steady man, evidently, the other a smart, youngish chap. They read the name on the bows and stopped to look at her. Says the elder man: '*Apse Family*. That's the sanguinary female dog' (I'm putting it in that way) 'of a ship, Jack, that kills a man every voyage. I wouldn't sign in her—not for Joe, I wouldn't.' And the other says: 'If she were mine, I'd have her towed on the mud and set

on fire, blamme if I wouldn't.' Then the first man chimes in: 'Much do they care! Men are cheap, God knows.' The younger one spat in the water alongside. 'They won't have me—not for double wages.'

"They hung about for some time and then walked up the dock. Half an hour later I saw them both on our deck looking for the mate, and apparently very anxious to be taken on. And they were."

"How do you account for this?" I asked.

"What would you say?" he retorted. "Recklessness! The vanity of boasting in the evening to all their chums: 'We've just shipped in that there *Apse Family*. Blow her. She ain't going to scare us.' Sheer sailor-like perversity! A sort of curiosity. Well—a little of all that, no doubt. I put the question to them in the course of the voyage. The answer of the elderly chap was:

" 'A man can die but once.' The younger assured me in a mocking tone that he wanted to see 'how she would do it this time.' But I tell you what: there was a sort of fascination about the brute."

Jermyn, who seemed to have seen every ship in the world, broke in sulkily:

"I saw her once out of this very window towing up the river; a great black ugly thing, going along like a big hearse."

"Something sinister about her looks, wasn't there?" said the man in tweeds, looking down at old Jermyn with a friendly eye. "I always had a sort of horror of her. She gave me a beastly shock when I was no more than fourteen, the very first day—nay, hour—I joined her. Father came up to see me off, and was to go down to Gravesend with us. I was his second boy to go to sea. My big brother was already an officer then. We got on board about eleven in the morning, and found the ship ready to drop out of the basin, stern first. She had not moved three times her own length when, at a little pluck the tug gave her to enter the dock gates, she made one of her rampaging starts, and put such a weight on the check rope—a new six-inch hawser—that forward there they had no chance to ease it round in time, and it parted. I saw the broken end fly up high in the air, and the next moment that brute brought her quarter against the pier-head with a jar that staggered everybody about her decks. She didn't hurt herself. Not she! But one of the boys the mate had sent aloft on the mizzen to do something came down on the

poop-deck—thump—right in front of me. He was not much older than myself. We had been grinning at each other only a few minutes before. He must have been handling himself carelessly, not expecting to get such a jerk. I heard his startled cry—'Oh!'—in a high treble as he felt himself going, and looked up in time to see him go limp all over as he fell. Ough! Poor father was remarkably white about the gills when we shook hands in Gravesend. 'Are you all right?' he says, looking hard at me. 'Yes, father.' 'Quite sure?' 'Yes, father.' 'Well, then, good-bye, my boy.' He told me afterward that for half a word he would have carried me off home with him there and then. I am the baby of the family—you know," added the man in tweeds, stroking his moustache with an ingenuous smile.

I acknowledged this interesting communication by a sympathetic murmur. He waved his hand carelessly.

"This might have utterly spoiled a chap's nerve for going aloft, you know—utterly. He fell within two feet of me, cracking his head on a mooring-bitt. Never moved. Stone dead. Nice-looking little fellow he was. I had just been thinking we would be great chums. However, that wasn't yet the worst that brute of a ship could do. I served in her three years of my time, and then I got transferred to the *Lucy Apse* for a year. The sail-maker we had in the *Apse Family* turned up there, too, and I remember him saying to me one evening, after we had been a week at sea; 'Isn't she a meek little ship?' No wonder we thought the *Lucy Apse* a dear, meek, little ship after getting clear of that big, rampaging, savage brute. It was like heaven. Her officers seemed to me the restfullest lot of men on earth. To me who had known no ship but the *Apse Family,* the *Lucy* was like a sort of magic craft that did what you wanted her to do of her own accord. One evening we got caught aback pretty sharply from right ahead. In about ten minutes we had her full again, sheets aft, tacks down, decks cleared, and the officer of the watch leaning against the weather rail peacefully. It seemed simply marvellous to me. The other would have stuck for half an hour in irons, rolling her decks full of water, knocking the men about—spars cracking, braces snapping, yards taking charge, and a confounded scare going on aft because of her beastly rudder, which she had a way of flapping about fit to raise your hair on end. I couldn't get over my wonder for days.

"Well, I finished my last year of apprenticeship in that jolly

little ship—she wasn't so little, either, but after that other heavy devil she seemed but a plaything to handle. I finished my time and passed; and then, just as I was thinking of having three weeks of real good time on shore, I got at breakfast a letter asking me the earliest day I could be ready to join the *Apse Family* as third mate. I gave my plate a shove that shot it into the middle of the table; dad looked up over his paper; mother raised her hands in astonishment, and I went out bareheaded into our bit of garden, where I walked round and round for an hour.

"When I came in again mother was out of the dining-room, and dad had shifted berth into his big armchair. The letter was lying on the mantelpiece.

" 'It's very creditable to you to get the offer, and very kind of them to make it,' he said. 'And I see also that Charles has been appointed chief mate of that ship for one voyage.'

"There was over leaf a P. S. to that effect in Mr. Apse's own handwriting, which I had overlooked. Charley was my big brother.

" 'I don't like very much to have two of my boys together in one ship,' father goes on, in his deliberate, solemn way. 'And I may tell you that I would not mind writing Mr. Apse a letter to that effect.'

"Dear old dad! He was a wonderful father. What would you have done? The mere notion of going back (and as an officer, too), to be worried and bothered, and kept on the jump night and day by that brute, made me feel sick. But she wasn't a ship you could afford to fight shy of. Besides, the most genuine excuse could not be given without mortally offending Apse & Sons. The firm, and I believe the whole family down to the old unmarried aunts in Lancashire, had grown desperately touchy about that accursed ship's character. This was the case for answering 'Ready now' from your very death-bed if you wished to die in their good graces. And that's precisely what I did answer—by wire, to have it over and done with at once.

"The prospect of being shipmates with my big brother cheered me up considerably, though it made me a bit anxious, too. Ever since I remember myself as a little chap he had been very good to me, and I looked upon him as the finest fellow in the world. And so he was. No better officer ever walked the deck of a merchant ship. And that's a fact. He was a fine, strong, upstanding, sun-tanned young fellow, with his brown hair curling a little,

and an eye like a hawk. He was just splendid. We hadn't seen each other for many years, and even this time, though he had been in England three weeks already, he hadn't showed up at home yet, but had spent his spare time in Surrey somewhere, making up to Maggie Colchester, old Captain Colchester's niece. Her father, a great friend of dad's, was in the sugar-broking business, and Charley made a sort of second home of their house. I wondered what my big brother would think of me. There was a sort of sternness about Charley's face which never left it, not even when he was larking in his rather wild fashion.

"He received me with a great shout of laughter. He seemed to think my joining as an officer the greatest joke in the world. There was a difference of ten years between us, and I suppose he remembered me best in pinafores. I was a kid of four when he first went to sea. It surprised me to find how boisterous he could be.

" 'Now we shall see what you are made of,' he cried. And he held me off by the shoulders, and punched my ribs, and hustled me into his berth. 'Sit down, Ned. I am glad of the chance of having you with me. I'll put the finishing touch to you, my young officer, providing you're worth the trouble. And, first of all, get it well into your head that we are not going to let this brute kill anybody this voyage. We'll stop her racket.'

"I perceived he was in dead earnest about it. He talked grimly of the ship, and how we must be careful and never allow this ugly beast to catch us napping with any of her damned tricks.

"He gave me a regular lecture on special seamanship for the use of the *Apse Family;* then, changing his tone, he began to talk at large, rattling off the wildest, funniest nonsense, till my sides ached with laughing. I could see very well he was a bit above himself with high spirits. It couldn't be because of my coming. Not to that extent. But, of course, I wouldn't have dreamt of asking what was the matter. I had a proper respect for my big brother, I can tell you. But it was all made plain enough a day or two afterward, when I heard that Miss Maggie Colchester was coming for the voyage. Uncle was giving her a sea-trip for the benefit of her health.

"I don't know what could have been wrong with her health. She had a beautiful colour, and a deuce of a lot of fair hair. She didn't care a rap for wind, or rain, or spray, or sun, or green

seas, or anything. She was a blue-eyed, jolly girl of the very best sort, but the way she cheeked my big brother used to frighten me. I always expected it to end in an awful row. However, nothing decisive happened till after we had been in Sydney for a week. One day, in the men's dinner hour, Charley sticks his head into my cabin. I was stretched out on my back on the settee, smoking in peace.

"'Come ashore with me, Ned,' he says, in his curt way.

"I jumped up, of course, and away after him down the gangway and up George Street. He strode along like a giant, and I at his elbow, panting. It was confoundedly hot. 'Where on earth are you rushing me to, Charley?' I made bold to ask.

"'Here,' he says.

"'Here' was a jeweller's shop. I couldn't imagine what he could want there. It seemed a sort of mad freak. He thrust under my nose three rings, which looked very tiny on his big, brown palm, growling out—

"'For Maggie! Which?'

"I got a kind of scare at this. I couldn't make a sound, but I pointed at the one that sparkled white and blue. He put it in his waistcoat pocket, paid for it with a lot of sovereigns, and bolted out. When we got on board I was quite out of breath. 'Shake hands, old chap,' I gasped out. He gave me a thump on the back. 'Give what orders you like to the boatswain when the hands turn-to,' says he; 'I am off duty this afternoon.'

"Then he vanished from the deck for a while, but presently he came out of the cabin with Maggie, and these two went over the gangway publicly, before all hands, going for a walk together on that awful, blazing, hot day, with clouds of dust flying about. They came back after a few hours looking very staid, but didn't seem to have the slightest idea where they had been. Anyway, that's the answer they both made to Mrs. Colchester's question at tea-time.

"And didn't she turn on Charley, with her voice like an old night cabman's. 'Rubbish. Don't know where you've been! Stuff and nonsense. You've walked the girl off her legs. Don't do it again.'

"It's surprising how meek Charley could be with that old woman. Only on one occasion he whispered to me, 'I'm jolly glad she isn't Maggie's aunt, except by marriage. That's no sort of relationship.' But I think he let Maggie have too much of

her own way. She was hopping all over that ship in her yachting skirt and a red tam o'shanter like a bright bird on a dead black tree. The old salts used to grin to themselves when they saw her coming along, and offered to teach her knots or splices. I believe she liked the men, for Charley's sake, I suppose.

"As you may imagine, the diabolic propensities of that cursed ship were never spoken of on board. Not in the cabin, at any rate. Only once on the homeward passage Charley said, incautiously, something about bringing all her crew home this time. Captain Colchester began to look uncomfortable at once, and that silly, hard-bitten old woman flew out at Charley as though he had said something indecent. I was quite confounded myself; as to Maggie, she sat completely mystified, opening her blue eyes very wide. Of course, before she was a day older she wormed it all out of me. She was a very difficult person to lie to.

" 'How awful,' she said, quite solemn. 'So many poor fellows. I am glad the voyage is nearly over. I won't have a moment's peace about Charley now.'

"I assured her Charley was all right. It took more than that ship knew to get over a seaman like Charley. And she agreed with me.

"Next day we got the tug off Dungeness; and when the tow-rope was fast Charley rubbed his hands and said to me in an undertone:

" 'We've baffled her, Neddy.'

" 'Looks like it,' I said, with a grin at him. It was beautiful weather, and the sea as smooth as a millpond. We went up the river without a shadow of trouble except once, when off Hole Haven, the brute took a sudden sheer and nearly had a barge anchored just clear of the fairway. But I was aft, looking after the steering, and she did not catch me napping that time. Charley came up on the poop, looking very concerned. 'Close shave,' says he.

" 'Never mind, Charley,' I answered, cheerily. 'You've tamed her.'

"We were to tow right up to the dock. The river pilot boarded us below Gravesend, and the first words I heard him say were: 'You may just as well take your port anchor inboard at once, Mr. Mate.'

"This had been done when I went forward. I saw Maggie on the forecastle head enjoying the bustle, and I begged her to go

aft, but she took no notice of me, of course. Then Charley, who was very busy with the head gear, caught sight of her and shouted in his biggest voice: 'Get off the forecastle head, Maggie. You're in the way here.' For answer she made a funny face at him, and I saw poor Charley turn away, hiding a smile. She was flushed with the excitement of getting home again, and her blue eyes seemed to snap electric sparks as she looked at the river. A collier brig had gone round just ahead of us, and our tug had to stop her engines in a hurry to avoid running slap bang into her.

"In a moment, as is usually the case, all the shipping in the reach seemed to get into a hopeless tangle. A schooner and a ketch got up a small collision all to themselves right in the middle of the river. It was exciting to watch, and, meantime, our tug remained stopped. Any other ship than that brute could have been coaxed to keep straight for a couple of minutes—but not she! Her head fell off at once, and she began to drift down, taking her tug along with her. I noticed a cluster of coasters at anchor within a quarter of a mile of us, and I thought I had better speak to the pilot. 'If you let her get amongst that lot,' I said, quietly, 'she will grind some of them to bits before we get her out again.'

"'Don't I know her!' cries he, stamping his foot in a perfect fury. And he out with his whistle to make that bothered tug get the ship's head up again as quick as possible. He blew like mad, waving his arm to port, and presently we could see that the tug's engines had been set going ahead. Her paddles churned the water, but it was as if she had been trying to tow a rock—she couldn't get an inch out of that ship. Again the pilot blew his whistle, and waved his arm to port. We could see the tug's paddles turning faster and faster away, broad on our bow.

"For a moment tug and ship hung motionless in a crowd of moving shipping, and then the terrific strain that evil, stony-hearted brute would always put on everything tore the towing-chock clean out. The tow-rope surged over, snapping the iron stanchions of the head-rail one after another as if they had been sticks of sealing-wax. It was only then I noticed that in order to have a better view over our heads Maggie had stepped upon the port anchor as it lay flat on the forecastle deck.

"It had been lowered properly into its hardwood beds, but there had been no time to take a turn with it. Anyway, it was quite secure as it was, for going into dock; but I could see di-

rectly that the tow-rope would sweep under the fluke in another second. My heart flew right into my throat, but not before I had time to yell out: 'Jump clear of that anchor!'

"But I hadn't time to shriek out her name. I don't suppose she heard me at all. The first touch of the hawser against the fluke threw her down; she was up on her feet again quick as lightning, but she was up on the wrong side. I heard a horrid, scraping sound, and then that anchor, tipping over, rose up like something alive; its great, rough iron arm caught Maggie round the waist, seemed to clasp her close with a dreadful hug, and flung itself with her over and down in a terrific clang of iron, followed by heavy ringing blows that shook the ship from stem to stern— because the ring stopper held!"

"How horrible!" I exclaimed.

"I used to dream for years afterward of anchors catching hold of girls," said the man in tweeds, a little wildly. He shuddered. "With a most pitiful howl Charley was over after her almost on the instant. But, Lord! he didn't see as much as a gleam of her red tam o' shanter in the water. Nothing! nothing whatever! In a moment there were half a dozen boats around us, and he got pulled into one. I, with the boatswain and the carpenter, let go the other anchor in a hurry and brought the ship up somehow. The pilot had gone silly. He walked up and down the forecastle head wringing his hands and muttering to himself: 'Killing women, now! Killing women, now!' Not another word could you get out of him.

"Dusk fell, then a night black as pitch; and peering upon the river I heard a low, mournful hail, 'Ship, ahoy!' Two Gravesend watermen came alongside. They had a lantern in their wherry, and looked up the ship's side, holding on to the ladder without a word. I saw in the patch of light a lot of loose fair hair down there."

He shuddered again.

"After the tide turned poor Maggie's body had floated clear of one of them big mooring buoys," he explained. "I crept aft, feeling half dead, and managed to send a rocket up—to let the other searchers know on the river. And then I slunk away forward like a cur, and spent the night sitting on the heel of the bowsprit so as to be as far as possible out of Charley's way."

"Poor fellow!" I murmured.

"Yes. Poor fellow," he repeated musingly. "That brute

wouldn't let him—not even him—cheat her of her prey. But he made her fast in dock next morning. He did. We hadn't exchanged a word—not a single look for that matter. I didn't want to look at him. When the last rope was fast he put his hands to his head and stood gazing down at his feet as if trying to remember something. The men waited on the main deck for the words that end the voyage. Perhaps that is what he was trying to remember. I spoke for him. 'That'll do, men.'

"I never saw a crew leave a ship so quietly. They sneaked over the rail one after another, taking care not to bang their sea chests too heavily. They looked our way, but not one had the stomach to come up and offer to shake hands with the mate, as is usual.

"I followed him all over the empty ship to and fro, here and there, with no living soul about but the two of us, because the old ship-keeper had locked himself up in the galley—both doors. Suddenly poor Charley mutters, in a crazy voice: 'I'm done here,' and strides down the gangway with me at his heels, up the dock, out at the gate, on toward Tower Hill. He used to take rooms with a decent old landlady in America Square, to be near his work.

"All at once he stops short, turns round, and comes back straight at me. 'Ned,' says he, 'I am going home.' I had the good luck to sight a four-wheeler and got him in just in time. His legs were beginning to give way. In our hall he fell down on a chair, and I'll never forget father's and mother's amazed, perfectly still faces as they stood over him. They couldn't understand what had happened to him till I blubbered out 'Maggie got drowned, yesterday, in the river.'

"Mother let out a little cry. Father looks from him to me, and from me to him, as if comparing our faces—for, upon my soul, Charley did not resemble himself at all. Nobody moved; and the poor fellow raises his big brown hands slowly to his throat, and with one single tug rips everything open—collar, shirt, waistcoat, into rags—a perfect wreck and ruin of a man. Father and I got him upstairs somehow, and mother pertty nearly killed herself nursing him through a brain fever."

The man in tweeds nodded at me significantly.

"Ah! there was nothing that could be done with that brute. She had a devil in her."

"Where's your brother?" I asked, expecting to hear he was

dead. But he was commanding a smart steamer on the China coast, and never came home now.

Jermyn fetched a heavy sigh, and the handkerchief being now sufficiently dry, put it up tenderly to his red and lamentable nose.

"She was a ravening beast," the man in tweeds started again. "Old Colchester put his foot down and resigned. And would you believe it? Apse & Sons wrote to ask whether he wouldn't reconsider his decision! Anything to save the good name of the *Apse Family!* Old Colchester went to the office then and said that he would take charge again but only to sail her out into the North Sea and scuttle her there. He was nearly off his chump. He used to be darkish iron-gray, but his hair went snow-white in a fortnight. And Mr. Lucian Apse (they had known each other as young men) pretended not to notice it. Eh! Here's infatuation if you like! Here's pride for you!

"They jumped at the first man they could get to take her, for fear of the scandal of the *Apse Family* not being able to find a skipper. He was a festive soul, I believe, but he stuck to her grim and hard. Wilmot was his second mate. A harum-scarum fellow, and pretending to a great scorn for all the girls. The fact is he was really timid. But let only one of them do as much as lift her little finger in encouragement, and there was nothing that could hold the beggar. As apprentice, once, he deserted abroad after a petticoat, and would have gone to the dogs then if his skipper hadn't taken the trouble to find him and lug him by the ears out of some house of perdition or other.

"It was said that one of the firm had been heard once to express a hope that this brute of a ship would get lost soon. I can hardly credit the tale, unless it might have been Mr. Alfred Apse, whom the family didn't think much of. They had him in the office, but he was considered a bad egg altogether, always flying off to race meetings and coming home drunk. You would have thought that a ship so full of deadly tricks would run herself ashore some day out of sheer cussedness. But not she! She was going to last forever. She had a nose to keep off the bottom."

Jermyn made a grunt of approval.

"A ship after a pilot's own heart, eh?" jeered the man in tweeds. "Well, Wilmot managed it. He was the man for it, but even he, perhaps, couldn't have done the trick without that green-eyed governess, or nurse, or whatever she was to the children of Mr. and Mrs. Pamphilius.

"Those people were passengers in her from Port Adelaide to the Cape. Well, the ship went out and anchored outside for the day. The skipper—hospitable soul—had a lot of guests from town to a farewell lunch—as usual with him. It was five in the evening before the last shore boat left the side, and the weather looked ugly and dark in the gulf. There was no reason for him to get under way. However, as he had told everybody he was going that day, he imagined it was proper to do so anyhow. But as he had no mind after all these festivities to tackle the straits in the dark, with a scant wind, he gave orders to keep the ship under lower topsails and foresail as close as she would lie, dodging along the land till the morning. Then he sought his virtuous couch. The mate was on deck, having his face washed very clean with hard rain squalls. Wilmot relieved him at midnight.

"The *Apse Family* had, as you observed. a house on her poop . . ."

"A big, ugly white thing, sticking up," Jermyn murmured, sadly, at the fire.

"That's it: a companion for the cabin stairs and a sort of chart-room combined. The rain drove in gusts on the sleepy Wilmot. The ship was then surging slowly to the southward, close hauled, with the coast within three miles or so to windward. There was nothing to look out for in that part of the gulf, and Wilmot went round to dodge the squalls under the lee of that chart-room, whose door on that side was open. The night was black, like a barrel of coal-tar. And then he heard a woman's voice whispering to him.

"That confounded green-eyed girl of the Pamphilius people had put the kids to bed a long time ago, of course, but it seems couldn't get to sleep herself. She heard eight bells struck, and the chief mate come below to turn in. She waited a bit, then got into her dressing-gown and stole across the empty saloon and up the stairs into the chart-room. She sat down on the settee near the open door to cool herself, I daresay.

"I suppose when she whispered to Wilmot it was as if somebody had struck a match in the fellow's brain. I don't know how it was they had got so very thick. I fancy he had met her ashore a few times before. I couldn't make it out, because, when telling the story, Wilmot would break off to swear something awful at every second word. We had met on the quay in Sydney,

and he had an apron of sacking up to his chin, a big whip in his hand. A wagon-driver. Glad to do anything not to starve. That's what he had come down to.

"However, there he was, with his head inside the door, on the girl's shoulder as likely as not—officer of the watch! The helmsman, on giving his evidence afterward, said that he shouted several times that the binnacle lamp had gone out. It didn't matter to him, because his orders were to 'sail her close.' 'I thought it funny,' he said, 'that the ship should keep on falling off in squalls, but I luffed her up every time as close as I was able. It was so dark I couldn't see my hand before my face, and the rain came in bucketsful on my head.'

"The truth was that at every squall the wind hauled aft a little, till gradually the ship came to be heading straight for the coast, without a single soul in her being aware of it. Wilmot himself confessed that he had not been near the standard compass for an hour. He might well have confessed! The first thing he knew was the man on the lookout shouting blue murder forward there.

"He tore his neck free, he says, and yelled back at him: 'What do you say?'

"'I think I hear breakers ahead, sir,' howled the man, and came rushing aft with the rest of the watch, in the 'awfullest blinding deluge that ever fell from the sky,' Wilmot says. For a second or so he was so scared and bewildered that he could not remember on which side of the gulf the ship was. He wasn't a good officer, but he was a seaman all the same. He pulled himself together in a second, and the right orders sprang to his lips without thinking. They were to hard up with the helm and shiver the main and mizzen-topsails.

"It seems that the sails actually fluttered. He couldn't see them, but he heard them rattling and banging above his head. 'No use! She was too slow in going off,' he went on, his dirty face twitching, and the damn'd carter's whip shaking in his hand. 'She seemed to stick fast.' And then the flutter of the canvas above his head ceased. At this critical moment the wind hauled aft again with a gust, filling the sails, and sending the ship with a great way upon the rocks on her lee bow. She had overreached herself in her last little game. Her time had come—the hour, the man, the black night, the treacherous gust of wind—the right woman to put an end to her. The brute deserved nothing better.

Strange are the instruments of Providence. There's a sort of poetical justice——"

The man in tweeds looked hard at me.

"The first ledge she went over stripped the false keel off her. Rip! The skipper, rushing out of his berth, found a crazy woman, in a red flannel dressing-down, flying round and round the cuddy, screeching like a cockatoo.

"The next bump knocked her clean under the cabin table. It also started the stern-post and carried away the rudder, and then that brute ran up a shelving, rocky shore, tearing her bottom out, till she stopped short, and the foremast dropped over the bows like a gangway."

"Anybody lost?" I asked.

"No one, unless that fellow, Wilmot," answered the gentleman, unknown to Miss Blank, looking round for his cap. "And his case was worse than drowning for a man. Everybody got ashore all right. Gale didn't come on till next day, dead from the west, and broke up that brute in a surprisingly short time. It was as though she had been rotten at heart." . . . He changed his tone. "Rain left off. I must get my bike and rush home to dinner. I live in Herne Bay—came out for a spin this morning."

He nodded at me in a friendly way, and went out with a swagger.

"Do you know who he is, Jermyn?" I asked.

The North Sea pilot shook his head dismally. "Fancy losing a ship in that silly fashion! Oh, dear! oh, dear!" he groaned in lugubrious tones, spreading his damp handkerchief again like a curtain before the glowing grate.

On going out I exchanged a glance and a smile (strictly proper) with the respectable Miss Blank. barmaid of the Three Crows.

A MAYOR AND HIS PEOPLE[1]

By THEODORE DREISER

HERE is the story of an individual whose political and social example, if such things are ever worth anything (the moralists to the contrary notwithstanding), should have been, at the time, of greatest importance to every citizen of the United States. Only it was not. Or was it? Who really knows? Anyway, he and his career are entirely forgotten by now, and have been these many years.

He was the mayor of one of those dreary New England mill towns in northern Massachusetts—a bleak, pleasureless realm of about forty thousand, where, from the time he was born until he finally left at the age of thirty-six to seek his fortune elsewhere, he had resided without change. During that time he had worked in various of the local mills, which in one way and another involved nearly all of the population. He was a mill shoe-maker by trade, or, in other words, a factory shoe-hand, knowing only a part of all the processes necessary to make a shoe in that fashion. Still, he was a fair workman, and earned as much as fifteen or eighteen dollars a week at times—rather good pay for that region. By temperament a humanitarian, or possibly because of his own humble state one who was compelled to take cognizance of the difficulties of others, he finally expressed his mental unrest by organizing a club for the study and propagation of socialism, and later, when it became powerful enough to have a candidate and look for political expression of some kind, he was its first, and thereafter for a number of years, its regular candidate for mayor. For a long time, or until its membership became sufficient to attract some slight political attention, its members (following our regular American, unintellectual custom) were looked upon by the rest of the people as a body of harmless kickers, filled with fool notions about a man's duty to his fellowman, some silly dream about an honest and economical administration of public affairs—their city's affairs, to be exact. We are so wise

[1] From *Twelve Men*, by Theodore Dreiser; copyright, 1919, by Boni and Liveright, Inc. Reprinted by permission of the author and the publishers.

in America, so interested in our fellowman, so regardful of his welfare. They were so small in number, however, that they were little more than an object of pleasant jest, useful for that purpose alone.

This club, however, continued to put up its candidate until about 1895, when suddenly it succeeded in polling the very modest number of fifty-four votes—double the number it had succeeded in polling any previous year. A year later one hundred and thirty-six were registered, and the next year six hundred. Then suddenly the mayor who won that year's battle died, and a special election was called. Here the club polled six hundred and one, a total and astonishing gain of one. In 1898 the perennial candidate was again nominated and received fifteen hundred, and in 1899, when he ran again, twenty-three hundred votes, which elected him.

If this fact be registered casually here, it was not so regarded in that typically New England mill town. Ever study New England—its Puritan, self-defensive, but unintellectual and selfish psychology? Although this poor little snip of a mayor was only elected for one year, men paused astounded, those who had not voted for him, and several of the older conventional political and religious order, wedded to their church and all the routine of the average puritanic mill town, actually cried. No one knew, of course, who the new mayor was, or what he stood for. There were open assertions that the club behind him was anarchistic—that ever-ready charge against anything new in America—and that the courts should be called upon to prevent his being seated. And this from people who were as poorly "off" commercially and socially as any might well be. It was stated, as proving the worst, that he was, or had been, a mill worker!—and, before that a grocery clerk—both at twelve a week, or less!! Immediate division of property, the forcing of all employers to pay as much as five a day to every laborer (an unheard-of sum in New England), and general constraint and subversion of individual rights (things then unknown in America, of course), loomed in the minds of these conventional Americans as the natural and immediate result of so modest a victory. The old-time politicians and corporations who understood much better what the point was, the significance of this straw, were more or less disgruntled, but satisfied that it could be undone later.

An actual conversation which occurred on one of the outlying

street corners one evening about dusk will best illustrate the entire situation.

"Who is the man, anyway?" asked one citizen of a total stranger whom he had chanced to meet.

"Oh, no one in particular, I think. A grocery clerk, they say."

"Astonishing, isn't it? Why, I never thought those people would get anything. Why, they didn't even figure last year."

"Seems to be considerable doubt as to just what he'll do."

"That's what I've been wondering. I don't take much stock in all their talk about anarchy. A man hasn't so very much power as mayor."

"No," said the other.

"We ought to give him a trial, anyway. He's won a big fight. I should like to see him, see what he looks like."

"Ah, nothing startling. I know him."

"Rather young, ain't he?"

"Yes."

"Where did he come from?"

"Oh, right around here."

"Was he a mill-hand?"

"Yes."

The stranger made inquiry as to other facts and then turned off at a corner.

"Well," he observed at parting, "I don't know. I'm inclined to believe in the man. I should like to see him myself. Good-night."

"Good-night," said the other, waving his hand. "When you see me again you will know that you are looking at the mayor."

The inquirer stared after him and saw a six-foot citizen, of otherwise medium proportions, whose long, youthful face and mild gray eyes, with just a suggestion of washed-out blue in them, were hardly what was to be expected of a notorious and otherwise astounding political figure.

"He is too young," was the earliest comment, when the public once became aware of his personality.

"Why, he is nothing but a grocery clerk," was another, the skeptical and condemnatory possibilities of which need not be dilated upon here.

And he was, in his way, nothing much of a genius, as such things go in politics, but an interesting figure. Without much taste (or its cultivated shadow) or great vision of any kind, he

was still a man who sensed the evils of great and often unnecessary social inequalities and the need of reorganizing influences, which would tend to narrow the vast gulf between the unorganized and ignorant poor, and the huge beneficiaries of unearned (yes, and not even understood) increment. For what does the economic wisdom of the average capitalist amount to, after all: the narrow, gourmandizing hunger of the average multi-millionaire?

At any rate, people watched him as he went to and fro between his office and his home, and reached the general conclusion after the first excitement had died down that he did not amount to much.

When introduced into his office in the small but pleasant city hall, he came into contact with a "ring," and a fixed condition, which nobody imagined a lone young mayor could change. Old-time politicians sat there giving out contracts for street-cleaning, lighting, improvements and supplies of all kinds, and a bond of mutual profit bound them closely together.

"I think we ought to get together and have some sort of a conference about the letting of contracts," said the president of the city council to him one morning shortly after he had been installed. "You will find these gentlemen ready to meet you half-way in these matters."

"I'm very glad to hear that," he replied. "I've something to say in my message to the council, which I'll send over in the morning.

The old-time politician eyed him curiously, and he eyed the old-time politician in turn, not aggressively, but as if they might come to a very pleasant understanding if they wanted to, and then went back to his office.

The next day his message was made public, and this was its key-note:

"All contract work for the city should be let with a proviso that the workmen employed receive not less than two dollars a day."

The dissatisfied roar that followed was not long in making itself heard all over the city.

"Stuff and nonsense," yelled the office jobbers in a chorus. "Socialism!" "Anarchy!" "This thing must be put down!" "The city would be bankrupt in a year." "No contractor could afford to pay his ordinary day laborers two a day. The city could not afford to pay any contractor enough to do it."

"The prosperity of the city is not greater than the prosperity of the largest number of its component individuals," replied the mayor, in a somewhat altruistic and economically abstruse argument on the floor of the council hall. "We must find contractors."

"We'll see about that," said the members of the opposition. "Why, the man's crazy. If he thinks he can run this town on a goody-good basis and make everybody rich and happy, he's going to get badly fooled, that's all there is to that."

Fortunately for him three of the eight council members were fellows of the mayor's own economic beliefs, individuals elected on the same ticket with him. These men could not carry a resolution, but they could stop one from being carried over the mayor's veto. Hence it was found that if the contracts could not be given to men satisfactory to the mayor they could not be given at all, and he stood in a fair way to win.

"What the hell's the use of us sitting here day after day!" were the actual words of the leading members of the opposition in the council some weeks later, when the fight became wearisome. "We can't pass the contracts over his veto. I say let 'em go."

So the proviso was tacked on, that two a day was the minimum wage to be allowed, and the contracts passed.

The mayor's followers were exceedingly jubilant at this, more so than he, who was of a more cautious and less hopeful temperament.

"Not out of the woods yet, gentlemen," he remarked to a group of his adherents at the reform club. "We have to do a great many things sensibly if we expect to keep the people's confidence and 'win again.' "

Under the old system of letting contracts, whenever there was a wage rate stipulated, men were paid little or nothing and the work was not done. There was no pretense of doing it. Garbage and ashes accumulated, and papers littered the streets. The old contractor who had pocketed the appropriated sum thought to do so again.

"I hear the citizens are complaining as much as ever," said the mayor to this individual one morning. "You will have to keep the streets clean."

The contractor, a robust, thick-necked, heavy-jawed Irishman, of just so much refinement as the sudden acquisition of a comfortable fortune would allow, looked him quizzically over, won-

dering whether he was "out" for a portion of the appropriation or whether he was really serious.

"We can fix that between us," he said.

"There's nothing to fix," replied the mayor. "All I want you to do is to clean the streets."

The contractor went away and for a few days after the streets were really clean, but it was only for a few days.

In his walks about the city the mayor himself found garbage and paper uncollected, and then called upon his new acquaintance again.

"I'm mentioning this for the last time, Mr. M——," he said. "You will have to fulfill your contract, or resign in favor of some one who will."

"Oh, I'll clean them, well enough," said this individual, after five minutes of rapid fire explanation. "Two dollars a day for men is high, but I'll see that they're clean."

Again he went away, and again the mayor sauntered about, and then one morning sought out the contractor in his own office.

"This is the end," he said, removing a cigar from his mouth and holding it before him with his elbow at right angles. "You are discharged from this work. I'll notify you officially to-morrow."

"It can't be done the way you want it," the contractor exclaimed with an oath. "There's no money in it at two dollars. Hell, anybody can see that."

"Very well," said the mayor in a kindly, well-modulated tone. "Let another man try, then."

The next day he appointed a new contractor, and with a schedule before him showing how many men should be employed and how much profit he might expect, the latter succeeded. The garbage was daily removed, and the streets carefully cleaned.

Then there was a new manual training school about to be added to the public school system at this time, and the contract for building was to be let, when the mayor threw a bomb into the midst of the old-time jobbers at the city council. A contractor had already been chosen by them and the members were figuring out their profits, when at one of the public discussions of the subject the mayor said:

"Why shouldn't the city build it, gentlemen?"

"How can it?" exclaimed the councilmen. "The city isn't an individual; it can't watch carefully."

"It can hire its own architect, as well as any contractor. Let's try it."

There were sullen tempers in the council chamber after this, but the mayor was insistent. He called an architect who made a ridiculously low estimate. Never had a public building been estimated so cheaply before.

"See here," said one of the councilmen when the plans were presented to the chamber—"This isn't doing this city right, and the gentlemen of the council ought to put their feet down on any such venture as this. You're going to waste the city's money on some cheap thing in order to catch votes."

"I'll publish the cost of the goods as delivered," said the mayor. "Then the people can look at the building when it's built. We'll see how cheap it looks then."

To head off political trickery on the part of the enemy he secured bills for material as delivered, and publicly compared them with prices paid for similar amounts of the same material used in other buildings. So the public was kept aware of what was going on and the cry of cheapness for political purposes set at naught. It was the first structure erected by the city, and by all means the cheapest and best of all the city's buildings.

Excellent as these services were in their way, the mayor realized later that a powerful opposition was being generated and that if he were to retain the interest of his constituents he would have to set about something which would endear him and his cause to the public.

"I may be honest," he told one of his friends, "but honesty will play a lone hand with these people. The public isn't interested in its own welfare very much. It can't be bothered or hasn't the time. What I need is something that will impress it and still be worth while. I can't be reëlected on promises, or on my looks, either."

When he looked about him, however, he found the possibility of independent municipal action pretty well hampered by mandatory legislation. He had promised, for instance, to do all he could to lower the exorbitant gas rate and to abolish grade crossings, but the law said that no municipality could do either of these things without first voting to do so three years in succession—a little precaution taken by the corporation representing such things long before he came into power. Each vote must be for such contemplated action, or it could not become a law.

"I know well enough that promises are all right," he said to one of his friends, "and that these laws are good enough excuses, but the public won't take excuses from me for three years. If I want to be mayor again I want to be doing something, and doing it quick."

In the city was a gas corporation, originally capitalized at $45,000, and subsequently increased to $75,000, which was earning that year the actual sum of $58,000 over and above all expenses. It was getting ready to inflate the capitalization, as usual, and water its stock to the extent of $500,000, when it occurred to the mayor that if the corporation was making such enormous profits out of a $75,000 investment as to be able to offer to pay six per cent on $500,000 to investors, and put the money it would get for such stocks into its pocket, perhaps it could reduce the price of gas from one dollar and nineteen cents to a more reasonable figure. There was the three years' voting law, however, behind which, as behind an entrenchment, the very luxurious corporation lay comfortable and indifferent.

The mayor sent for his corporation counsel, and studied gas law for awhile. He found that at the State capital there was a State board, or commission, which had been created to look after gas companies in general, and to hear the complaints of municipalities which considered themselves unjustly treated.

"This is the thing for me," he said.

Lacking the municipal authority himself, he decided to present the facts in the case and appeal to this commission for a reduction of the gas rate.

When he came to talk about it he found that the opposition he would generate would be something much more than local. Back of the local reduction idea was the whole system of extortionate gas rates of the State and of the nation; hundreds of fat, luxurious gas corporations whose dividends would be threatened by any agitation on this question.

"You mean to proceed with this scheme of yours?" asked a prominent member of the local bar who called one morning to interview him. "I represent the gentlemen who are interested in our local gas company."

"I certainly do," replied the mayor.

"Well," replied the uncredentialed representative of private interests, after expostulating a long time and offering various "reasons" why it would be more profitable and politically ad-

vantageous for the new mayor not to proceed, "I've said all I can say. Now I want to tell you that you are going up against a combination that will be your ruin. You're not dealing with this town now; you're dealing with the State, the whole nation. These corporations can't afford to let you win, and they won't. You're not the one to do it; you're not big enough."

The mayor smiled and replied that of course he could not say as to that.

The lawyer went away, and the next day the mayor had his legal counsel look up the annual reports of the company for the consecutive years of its existence, as well as a bulletin issued by a firm of brokers, into whose hands the matter of selling a vast amount of watered stock it proposed to issue had been placed. He also sent for a gas expert and set him to figuring out a case for the people.

It was found by this gentleman that since the company was first organized it had paid dividends on its capital stock at the rate of ten per cent per annum, for the first thirty years; had made vast improvements in the last ten, and notwithstanding this fact, had paid twenty per cent, and even twenty-five per cent per annum in dividends. All the details of cost and expenditure were figured out, and then the mayor with his counsel took the train for the State capitol.

Never was there more excitement in political circles than when this young representative of no important political organization whatsoever arrived at the State capitol and walked, at the appointed time, into the private audience room of the commission. Every gas company, as well as every newspaper and every other representative of the people, had curiously enough become interested in the fight he was making, and there was a band of reporters at the hotel where he was stopping, as well as in the commission chambers in the State capitol where the hearing was to be. They wanted to know about him—why he was doing this, whether it wasn't a "strike" or the work of some rival corporation. The fact that he might foolishly be sincere was hard to believe.

"Gentlemen," said the mayor, as he took his stand in front of an august array of legal talent which was waiting to pick his argument to pieces in the commission chambers at the capitol, "I miscalculated but one thing in this case which I am about to lay before you, and that is the extent of public interest. I came here prepared to make a private argument, but now I want to ask

the privilege of making it public. I see the public itself is interested, or should be. I will ask leave to postpone my argument until the day after to-morrow."

There was considerable hemming and hawing over this, since from the point of view of the corporation it was most undesirable, but the commission was practically powerless to do aught but grant his request. And meanwhile the interest created by the newspapers added power to his cause. Hunting up the several representatives and senators from his district, he compelled them to take cognizance of the cause for which he was battling, and when the morning of the public hearing arrived a large audience was assembled in the chamber of representatives.

When the final moment arrived the young mayor came forward, and after making a very simple statement of the cause which led him to request a public hearing and the local condition which he considered unfair begged leave to introduce an expert, a national examiner of gas plants and lighting facilities, for whom he had sent, and whose twenty years of experience had enabled him to prepare a paper on the condition of the gas-payers in the mayor's city.

The commission was not a little surprised by this, but signified its willingness to hear the expert as counsel for the city, and as his statement was read a very clear light was thrown upon the situation.

Counsel for the various gas corporations interrupted freely. The mayor himself was constantly drawn into the argument, but his replies were so simple and convincing that there was not much satisfaction to be had in stirring him. Instead, the various counsel took refuge in long-winded discussions about the methods of conducting gas plants in other cities, the cost of machinery, labor and the like, which took days and days, and threatened to extend into weeks. The astounding facts concerning large profits and the present intentions of not only this but every other company in the State could not be dismissed. In fact the revelation of huge corporation profits everywhere became so disturbing that after the committee had considered and reconsidered, it finally, when threatened with political extermination, voted to reduce the price of gas to eighty cents.

It is needless to suggest the local influence of this decision. When the mayor came home he received an ovation, and that at the hands of many of the people who had once been so fearful of

him, but he knew that this enthusiasm would not last long. Many disgruntled elements were warring against him, and others were being more and more stirred up. His home life was looked into as well as his past, his least childish or private actions. It was a case of finding other opportunities for public usefulness, or falling into the innocuous peace which would result in his defeat.

In the platform on which he had been elected was a plank which declared that it was the intention of this party, if elected, to abolish local grade crossings, the maintenance of which had been the cause of numerous accidents and much public complaint. With this plank he now proposed to deal.

In this course he was hampered by the law before mentioned, which declared that no city could abolish its grade crossings without having first submitted the matter to the people during three successive years and obtained their approval each time. Behind this law was not now, however, as in the case of the gas company, a small $500,000 corporation, but all the railroads which controlled New England, and to which brains and legislators, courts and juries, were mere adjuncts. Furthermore, the question would have to be voted on at the same time as his candidacy, and this would have deterred many another more ambitious politician. The mayor was not to be deterred, however. He began his agitation, and the enemy began theirs, but in the midst of what seemed to be a fair battle the great railway company endeavored to steal a march. There was suddenly and secretly introduced into the lower house of the State legislature a bill which in deceptive phraseology declared that the law which allowed all cities, by three successive votes, to abolish grade crossings in three years, was, in the case of a particular city mentioned, hereby abrogated for a term of four years. The question might not even be discussed politically.

When the news of this attempt reached the mayor, he took the first train for the State capitol and arrived there just in time to come upon the floor of the house when the bill was being taken up for discussion. He asked leave to make a statement. Great excitement was aroused by his timely arrival. Those who secretly favored the bill endeavored to have the matter referred to a committee, but this was not to be. One member moved to go on with the consideration of the bill, and after a close vote the motion was carried.

The mayor was then introduced.

After a few moments, in which the silent self-communing with which he introduced himself impressed every one with his sincerity, he said:

"I am accused of objecting to this measure because its enactment will remove, as a political issue, the one cause upon which I base my hope for reëlection. If there are no elevated crossings to vote for, there will be no excuse for voting for me. Gentlemen, you mistake the temper and the intellect of the people of our city. It is you who see political significance in this thing, but let me assure you that it is of a far different kind from that which you conceive. If the passing of this measure had any significance to me other than the apparent wrong of it, I would get down on my knees and urge its immediate acceptance. Nothing could elect me quicker. Nothing could bury the opposition further from view. If you wish above all things to accomplish my triumph you will only need to interfere with the rights of our city in this arbitrary manner, and you will have the thing done. I could absolutely ask nothing more."

The gentlemen who had this measure in charge weighed well these assertions and trifled for weeks with the matter, trying to make up their minds.

Meanwhile election time approached, and amid the growing interest of politics it was thought unwise to deal with it. A great fight was arranged for locally, in which every conceivable element of opposition was beautifully harmonized by forces and conceptions which it is almost impossible to explain. Democrats, republicans, prohibitionists, saloon men and religious circles, all were gathered into one harmonious body and inspired with a single idea, that of defeating the mayor. From some quarter, not exactly identified, was issued a call for a civic committee of fifty, which should take into its hands the duty of rescuing the city from what was termed a "throttling policy of commercial oppression and anarchy." Democrats, republicans, liquor and anti-liquorites, were invited to the same central meeting place, and came. Money was not lacking, nor able minds, to prepare campaign literature. It was openly charged that a blank check was handed in to the chairman of this body by the railway whose crossings were in danger, to be filled out for any amount necessary to the destruction of the official upstart who was seeking to revolutionize old methods and conditions.

As may be expected, this opposition did not lack daring in

making assertions contrary to facts. Charges were now made that the mayor was in league with the railroad to foist upon the city a great burden of expense, because the law under which cities could compel railroads to elevate their tracks declared that one-fifth of the burden of expense must be borne by the city and the remaining four-fifths by the railroad. It would saddle a debt of $250,000 upon the taxpayers, they said, and give them little in return. All the advantage would be with the railroad. "Postpone this action until the railroad can be forced to bear the entire expense, as it justly should," declared handbill writers, whose services were readily rendered to those who could afford to pay for them.

The mayor and his committee, although poor, answered with handbills and street corner speeches, in which he showed that even with the extravagantly estimated debt of $250,000, the city's tax-rate would not be increased by quite six cents to the individual. The cry that each man would have to pay five dollars more each year for ten years was thus wholesomely disposed of, and the campaign proceeded.

Now came every conceivable sort of charge. If he were not defeated, all reputable merchants would surely leave the city. Capital was certainly being scared off. There would be idle factories and empty stomachs. Look out for hard times. No one but a fool would invest in a city thus hampered.

In reply the mayor preached a fair return by corporations for benefits received. He, or rather his organization, took a door-to-door census of his following, and discovered a very considerable increase in the number of those intending to vote for him. The closest calculations of the enemy were discovered, the actual number they had fixed upon as sufficient to defeat him. This proved to the mayor that he must have three hundred more votes if he wished to be absolutely sure. These he hunted out from among the enemy, and had them pledged before the eventual morning came.

The night preceding election ended the campaign, for the enemy at least, in a blaze of glory, so to speak. Dozens of speakers for both causes were about the street corners and in the city meeting room.

Oratory poured forth in streams, and gasoline-lighted band-wagons rattled from street to street, emitting song and invective. Even a great parade was arranged by the anti-mayoral forces,

in which horses and men to the number of hundreds were brought in from cities nearby and palmed off as enthusiastic citizens.

"Horses don't vote," a watchword handed out by the mayor, took the edge off the extreme ardor of this invading throng, and set to laughing the hundreds of his partisans, who needed such encouragement.

Next day came the vote, and then for once, anyhow, he was justified. Not only was a much larger vote cast than ever, but he thrashed the enemy with a tail of two hundred votes to spare. It was an inspiring victory from one point of view, but rather doleful for the enemy. The latter had imported a car-load of fireworks, which now stood sadly unused upon the very tracks which, apparently, must in the future be raised. The crowning insult was offered when the successful forces offered to take them off their hands at half price.

For a year thereafter (a mayor was elected yearly there) less was heard of the commercial destruction of the city. Gas stood, as decided, at eighty cents a thousand. A new manual training school, built at a very nominal cost, a monument to municipal honesty, was also in evidence. The public water-works had also been enlarged and the rates reduced. The streets were clean.

Then the mayor made another innovation. During his first term of office there had been a weekly meeting of the reform club, at which he appeared and talked freely of his plans and difficulties. These meetings he now proposed to make public.

Every Wednesday evening for a year thereafter a spectacle of municipal self-consciousness was witnessed, which those who saw it felt sure would redound to the greater strength and popularity of the mayor. In a large hall, devoted to public gatherings, a municipal meeting was held. Every one was invited. The mayor was both host and guest, an individual who chose to explain his conduct and his difficulties and to ask advice. There his constituents gathered, not only to hear but to offer counsel.

"Gentlemen," so ran the gist of his remarks on various of these occasions, "the present week has proved a most trying one. I am confronted by a number of difficult problems which I will now try to explain to you. In the first place, you know my limitations as to power in the council. But three members now vote for me, and it is only by mutual concessions that we move forward at all."

Then would follow a detailed statement of the difficulties, and a general discussion. The commonest laborer was free to offer his

advice. Every question was answered in the broadest spirit of fellowship. An inquiry as to "what to do" frequently brought the most helpful advice. Weak and impossible solutions were met as such, and shown to be what they were. Radicals were assuaged, conservatives urged forward. The whole political situation was so detailed and explained that no intelligent person could leave, it was thought, with a false impression of the mayor's position or intent.

With five thousand or more such associated citizens abroad each day explaining, defending, approving the official conduct of the mayor, because they understood it, no misleading conceptions, it was thought, could arise. Men said that his purpose and current leaning in any matter was always clear. He was thought to be closer to his constituency than any other official within the whole range of the Americas and that there could be nothing but unreasoning partisan opposition to his rule.

After one year of such service a presidential campaign drew near, and the mayor's campaign for reëlection had to be contested at the same time. No gas monopoly evil was now a subject of contention. Streets were clean, contracts fairly executed; the general municipal interests as satisfactorily attended to as could be expected. Only the grade crossing war remained as an issue, and that would require still another vote after this. His record was the only available campaign argument.

On the other side, however, were the two organizations of the locally defeated great parties, and the railroad. The latter, insistent in its bitterness, now organized these two bodies into a powerful opposition. Newspapers were subsidized; the national significance of the campaign magnified; a large number of railroad-hands colonized. When the final weeks of the campaign arrived a bitter contest was waged, and money triumphed. Five thousand four hundred votes were cast for the mayor. Five thousand four hundred and fifty for the opposing candidate, who was of the same party as the successful presidential nominee.

It was a bitter blow, but still one easily borne by the mayor, who was considerable of a philosopher. With simple, undisturbed grace he retired, and three days later applied to one of the principal shoe factories for work at his trade.

"What? You're not looking for a job, are you?" exclaimed the astonished foreman.

"I am," said the mayor.

"You can go to work, all right, but I should think you could get into something better now."

"I suppose I can later," he replied, "when I complete my law studies. Just now I want to do this for a change, to see how things are with the rank and file." And donning the apron he had brought with him he went to work.

It was not long, however, before he was discharged, largely because of partisan influence anxious to drive him out of that region. It was said that this move of seeking a job in so simple a way was a bit of "grand standing"—insincere—that he didn't need to do it, and that he was trying to pile up political capital against the future. A little later a local grocery man of his social faith offered him a position as clerk, and for some odd reason—humanitarian and sectarian, possibly—he accepted this. At any rate, here he labored for a little while. Again many said he was attempting to make political capital out of this simple life in order to further his political interests later, and this possibly, even probably, was true. All men have methods of fighting for that which they believe. So here he worked for a time, while a large number of agencies pro and con continued to denounce or praise him, to ridicule or extol his so-called Jeffersonian simplicity. It was at this time that I encountered him—a tall, spare, capable and interesting individual, who willingly took me into his confidence and explained all that had hitherto befallen him. He was most interesting, really, a figure to commemorate in this fashion.

In one of the rooms of his very humble home—a kind of office or den, in a small house such as any clerk or working-man might occupy—was a collection of clippings, laudatory, inquiring, and abusive, which would have done credit to a candidate for the highest office in the land. One would have judged by the scrapbooks and envelopes stuffed to overflowing with long newspaper articles and editorials that had been cut from papers all over the country from Florida to Oregon, that his every movement at this time and earlier was all-essential to the people. Plainly, he had been watched, spied upon, and ignored by one class, while being hailed, praised and invited by another. Magazine editors had called upon him for contributions, journalists from the large cities had sought him out to obtain his actual views, citizens' leagues in various parts of the nation had invited him to come and speak, and yet he was still a very young man in years, not overintelligent

politically or philosophically, the ex-mayor of a small city, and the representative of no great organization of any sort.

In his retirement he was now comforted, if one can be so comforted, by these memories, still fresh in his mind and by the hope possibly for his own future, as well as by a droll humor with which he was wont to select the sharpest and most willful slur upon his unimpeachable conduct as an offering to public curiosity.

"Do you really want to know what people think of me?" he said to me on one occasion. "Well, here's something. Read this." And then he would hand me a bunch of the bitterest attacks possible, attacks which pictured him as a sly and treacherous enemy of the people—or worse yet a bounding anarchistic ignoramus. Personally I could not help admiring his stoic mood. It was superior to that of his detractors. Apparent falsehoods did not anger him. Evident misunderstandings could not, seemingly, disturb him.

"What do you expect?" he once said to me, after I had made a very careful study of his career for a current magazine, which, curiously, was never published. I was trying to get him to admit that he believed that his example might be fruitful of results agreeable to him in the future. I could not conclude that he really agreed with me. "People do not remember; they forget. They remember so long as you are directly before them with something that interests them. That may be a lower gas-rate, or a band that plays good music. People like strong people, and only strong people, characters of that sort—good, bad or indifferent—I've found that out. If a man or a corporation is stronger than I am, comes along and denounces me, or spends more money than I do (or can), buys more beers, makes larger promises, it is 'all day' for me. What has happened in my case is that, for the present, anyhow, I have come up against a strong corporation, stronger than I am. What I now need to do is to go out somewhere and get some more strength in some way, it doesn't matter much how. People are not so much interested in me or you, or your or my ideals in their behalf, as they are in strength, an interesting spectacle. And they are easily deceived. These big fighting corporations with their attorneys and politicians and newspapers make me look weak—puny. So the people forget me. If I could get out, raise one million or five hundred thousand dollars and give the corporations a good drubbing they would adore me—for awhile. Then I would have to go out and get

another five hundred thousand somewhere, or do something else."

"Quite so," I replied. "Yet *Vox populi, vox dei.*"

Sitting upon his own doorstep one evening, in a very modest quarter of the city, I said:

"Were you very much depressed by your defeat the last time?"

"Not at all," he replied. "Action, reaction, that's the law. All these things right themselves in time, I suppose, or, anyhow, they ought to. Maybe they don't. Some man who can hand the people what they really need or ought to have will triumph, I suppose, some time. I don't know, I'm sure. I hope so. I think the world is moving on, all right."

In his serene and youthful face, the pale blue, philosophical eyes, was no evidence of dissatisfaction with the strange experiences through which he had passed.

"You're entirely philosophical, are you?"

"As much as any one can be, I suppose. They seem to think that all my work was an evidence of my worthlessness," he said. "Well, maybe it was. Self-interest may be the true law, and the best force. I haven't quite made up my mind yet. My sympathies of course are all the other way. 'He ought to be sewing shoes in the penitentiary,' one paper once said of me. Another advised me to try something that was not above my intelligence, such as breaking rock or shoveling dirt. Most of them agreed, however," he added with a humorous twitch of his large, expressive mouth, "that I'll do very well if I will only stay where I am, or, better yet, get out of here. They want me to leave. That's the best solution for them."

He seemed to repress a smile that was hovering on his lips.

"The voice of the enemy," I commented.

"Yes, sir, the voice of the enemy," he added. "But don't think that I think I'm done for. Not at all. I have just returned to my old ways in order to think this thing out. In a year or two I'll have solved my problem, I hope. I may have to leave here, and I may not. Anyhow, I'll turn up somewhere, with something."

He did have to leave, however, public opinion never being allowed to revert to him again, and five years later, in a fairly comfortable managerial position in New York, he died. He had made a fight, well enough, but the time, the place, the stars, perhaps, were not quite right. He had no guiding genius, possibly, to pull him through. Adherents did not flock to him and save him. Possibly he wasn't magnetic enough—that pagan, non-

moral, non-propagandistic quality, anyhow. The fates did not fight for him as they do for some, those fates that ignore the billions and billions of others who fail. Yet are not all lives more or less failures, however successful they may appear to be at one time or another, contrasted, let us say, with what they hoped for? We compromise so much with everything—our dreams and all.

As for his reforms, they may be coming fast enough, or they may not. *In medias res.*

But as for him . . . ?

THE PROCURATOR OF JUDÆA[1]

By ANATOLE FRANCE

LÆLIUS LAMIA, born in Italy of illustrious parents, had not yet discarded the *toga prætexta* when he set out for the schools of Athens to study philosophy. Subsequently he took up his residence at Rome, and in his house on the Esquiline, amid a circle of youthful wastrels, abandoned himself to licentious courses. But being accused of engaging in criminal relations with Lepida, the wife of Sulpicius Quirinus, a man of consular rank, and being found guilty, he was exiled by Tiberius Cæsar. At that time he was just entering his twenty-fourth year. During the eighteen years that his exile lasted he traversed Syria, Palestine, Cappadocia, and Armenia, and made prolonged visits to Antioch, Cæsarea, and Jerusalem. When, after the death of Tiberius, Caius was raised to the purple, Lamia obtained permission to return to Rome. He even regained a portion of his possessions. Adversity had taught him wisdom.

He avoided all intercourse with the wives and daughters of Roman citizens, made no efforts towards obtaining office, held aloof from public honors, and lived a secluded life in his house on the Esquiline. Occupying himself with the task of recording all the remarkable things he had seen during his distant travels, he turned, as he said, the vicissitudes of his years of expiation into a diversion for his hours of rest. In the midst of these calm employments, alternating with assiduous study of the works of Epicurus, he recognized with a mixture of surprise and vexation that age was stealing upon him. In his sixty-second year, being afflicted with an illness which proved in no slight degree troublesome, he decided to have recourse to the waters at Baiæ. The coast at that point, once frequented by the halcyon, was at this date the resort of the wealthy Roman, greedy of pleasure. For a week Lamia lived alone, without a friend in the brilliant crowd. Then one day, after dinner, an inclination to which he yielded

[1] Copyright by Dodd, Mead & Company. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

urged him to ascend the incline, which, covered with vines that resembled bacchantes, looked out upon the waves.

Having reached the summit he seated himself by the side of a path beneath a terebinth, and let his glances wander over the lovely landscape. To his left, livid and bare, the Phlegræan plain stretched out towards the ruins of Cumæ. On his right, Cape Misenum plunged its abrupt spur beneath the Tyrrhenian Sea. Beneath his feet luxurious Baiæ, following the graceful outline of the coast, displayed its gardens, its villas thronged with statues, its porticos, its marble terraces along the shores of the blue ocean where the dolphins sported. Before him, on the other side of the bay, on the Campanian coast, gilded by the already sinking sun, gleamed the temples which far away rose above the laurels of Posilippo, whilst on the extreme horizon Vesuvius looked forth smiling.

Lamia drew from a fold of his toga a scroll containing the *Treatise upon Nature*, extended himself upon the ground, and began to read. But the warning cries of a slave necessitated his rising to allow of the passage of a litter which was being carried along the narrow pathway through the vineyards. The litter being uncurtained, permitted Lamia to see stretched upon the cushions as it was borne nearer to him the figure of an elderly man of immense bulk, who, supporting his head on his hand, gazed out with a gloomy and disdainful expression. His nose, which was aquiline, and his chin, which was prominent, seemed desirous of meeting across his lips, and his jaws were powerful.

From the first moment Lamia was convinced that the face was familiar to him. He hesitated a moment before the name came to him. Then suddenly hastening toward the litter with a display of surprise and delight——

"Pontius Pilate!" he cried. "The gods be praised who have permitted me to see you once again!"

The old man gave a signal to the slaves to stop, and cast a keen glance upon the stranger who had addressed him.

"Pontius, my dear host," resumed the latter, "have twenty years so far whitened my hair and hollowed my cheeks that you no longer recognize your friend Lælius Lamia?"

At this name Pontius Pilate dismounted from the litter as actively as the weight of his years and the heaviness of his gait permitted him, and embraced Lælius Lamia again and again.

"Gods! what a treat it is to me to see you once more! But,

alas, you call up memories of those long-vanished days when I was Procurator of Judæa in the province of Syria. Why, it must be thirty years ago that I first met you. It was at Cæsarea, whither you came to drag out your weary term of exile. I was fortunate enough to alleviate it a little, and out of friendship, Lamia, you followed me to that depressing place Jerusalem, where the Jews filled me with bitterness and disgust. You remained for more than ten years my guest and my companion, and in converse about Rome and things Roman we both of us managed to find consolation—you for your misfortunes, and I for my burdens of State."

Lamia embraced him afresh.

"You forget two things, Pontius; you are overlooking the facts that you used your influence on my behalf with Herod Antipas, and that your purse was freely open to me."

"Let us not talk of that," replied Pontius, "since after your return to Rome you sent me by one of your freedmen a sum of money which repaid me with usury."

"Pontius, I could never consider myself out of your debt by the mere payment of money. But tell me, have the gods fulfilled your desires? Are you in the enjoyment of all the happiness you deserve? Tell me about your family, your fortunes, your health."

"I have withdrawn to Sicily, where I possess estates, and where I cultivate wheat for the market. My eldest daughter, my best-loved Pontia, who has been left a widow, lives with me, and directs my household. The gods be praised, I have preserved my mental vigor; my memory is not in the least degree enfeebled. But old age always brings in its train a long procession of griefs and infirmities. I am cruelly tormented with gout. And at this very moment you find me on my way to the Phlegræan plain in search of a remedy for my sufferings. From that burning soil, whence at night flames burst forth, proceed acrid exhalations of sulphur, which, so they say, ease the pains and restore suppleness to the joints. At least, the physicians assure me that it is so."

"May you find it so in your case, Pontius! But, despite the gout and its burning torments, you scarcely look as old as myself, although in reality you must be my senior by ten years. Unmistakably you have retained a greater degree of vigor than I ever possessed, and I am overjoyed to find you looking so hale. Why, dear friend, did you retire from the public service before the customary age? Why, on resigning your governorship in

Judæa, did you withdraw to a voluntary exile on your Sicilian estates? Give me an account of your doings from the moment that I ceased to be a witness of them. You were preparing to suppress a Samaritan rising when I set out for Cappadocia, where I hoped to draw some profit from the breeding of horses and mules. I have not seen you since then. How did that expedition succeed? Pray tell me. Everything interests me that concerns you in any way."

Pontius Pilate sadly shook his head.

"My natural disposition," he said, "as well as a sense of duty, impelled me to fulfil my public responsibilities, not merely with diligence, but even with ardor. But I was pursued by unrelenting hatred. Intrigues and calumnies cut short my career in its prime, and the fruit it should have looked to bear has withered away. You ask me about the Samaritan insurrection. Let us sit down on this hillock. I shall be able to give you an answer in few words. Those occurrences are as vividly present to me as if they had happened yesterday.

"A man of the people, of persuasive speech—there are many such to be met with in Syria—induced the Samaritans to gather together in arms on Mount Gerizim (which in that country is looked upon as a holy place) under the promise that he would disclose to their sight the sacred vessels which in the ancient days of Evander and our father, Æneas, had been hidden away by an eponymous hero, or rather a tribal deity, named Moses. Upon this assurance the Samaritans rose in rebellion; but having been warned in time to forestall them, I dispatched detachments of infantry to occupy the mountain, and stationed cavalry to keep the approaches to it under observation.

"These measures of prudence were urgent. The rebels were already laying siege to the town of Tyrathaba, situated at the foot of Mount Gerizim. I easily dispersed them, and stifled the as yet scarcely organized revolt. Then, in order to give a forcible example with as few victims as possible, I handed over to execution the leaders of the rebellion. But you are aware, Lamia, in what strait dependence I was kept by the proconsul Vitellius, who governed Syria not in, but against the interests of Rome, and looked upon the provinces of the empire as territories which could be farmed out to tetrarchs. The head-men among the Samaritans, in their resentment against me, came and fell at his feet lamenting. To listen to them, nothing had been further from their

thoughts than to disobey Cæsar. It was I who had provoked the rising, and it was purely in order to withstand my violence that they had gathered together round Tyrathaba. Vitellius listened to their complaints, and handing over the affairs of Judæa to his friend Marcellus, commanded me to go and justify my proceedings before the Emperor himself. With a heart overflowing with grief and resentment I took ship. Just as I approached the shores of Italy, Tiberius, worn out with age and the cares of empire, died suddenly on the self-same Cape Misenum, whose peak we see from this very spot magnified in the mists of evening. I demanded justice of Caius, his successor, whose perception was naturally acute, and who was acquainted with Syrian affairs. But marvel with me, Lamia, at the maliciousness of fortune, resolved on my discomfiture. Caius then had in his suite at Rome the Jew Agrippa, his companion, the friend of his childhood, whom he cherished as his own eyes. Now Agrippa favored Vitellius, inasmuch as Vitellius was the enemy of Antipas, whom Agrippa pursued with his hatred. The Emperor adopted the prejudices of his beloved Asiatic, and refused even to listen to me. There was nothing for me to do but bow beneath the stroke of unmerited misfortune. With tears for my meat and gall for my portion, I withdrew to my estates in Sicily, where I should have died of grief if my sweet Pontia had not come to console her father. I have cultivated wheat, and succeeded in producing the fullest ears in the whole province. But now my life is ended; the future will judge between Vitellius and me."

"Pontius," replied Lamia, "I am persuaded that you acted toward the Samaritans according to the rectitude of your character, and solely in the interests of Rome. But were you not perchance on that occasion a trifle too much influenced by that impetuous courage which has always swayed you? You will remember that in Judæa it often happened that I who, younger than you, should naturally have been more impetuous than you, was obliged to urge you to clemency and suavity."

"Suavity toward the Jews!" cried Pontius Pilate. "Although you have lived amongst them, it seems clear that you ill understand those enemies of the human race. Haughty and at the same time base, combining an invincible obstinacy with a despicably mean spirit, they weary alike your love and your hatred. My character, Lamia, was formed upon the maxims of the divine Augustus. When I was appointed Procurator of Judæa, the

world was already penetrated with the majestic ideal of the *pax Romana*. No longer, as in the days of our internecine strife, were we witnesses to the sack of a province for the aggrandizement of a proconsul. I knew where my duty lay. I was careful that my actions should be governed by prudence and moderation. The gods are my witnesses that I was resolved upon mildness, and upon mildness only. Yet what did my benevolent intentions avail me? You were at my side, Lamia, when, at the outset of my career as ruler, the first rebellion came to a head. Is there any need for me to recall the details to you? The garrison had been transferred from Cæsarea to take up its winter quarters at Jerusalem. Upon the ensigns of the legionaries appeared the presentment of Cæsar. The inhabitants of Jerusalem, who did not recognize the indwelling divinity of the Emperor, were scandalized at this, as though, when obedience is compulsory, it were not less abject to obey a god than a man. The priests of their nation appeared before my tribunal imploring me with supercilious humility to have the ensigns removed from within the holy city. Out of reverence for the divine nature of Cæsar and the majesty of the empire, I refused to comply. Then the rabble made common cause with the priests, and all around the pretorium portentous cries of supplication arose. I ordered the soldiers to stack their spears in front of the tower of Antonia, and to proceed, armed only with sticks like lictors, to disperse the insolent crowd. But, heedless of blows, the Jews continued their entreaties, and the more obstinate amongst them threw themselves on the ground and, exposing their throats to the rods, deliberately courted death. You were a witness of my humiliation on that occasion, Lamia. By the order of Vitellius I was forced to send the insignia back to Cæsarea. That disgrace I had certainly not merited. Before the immortal gods I swear that never once during my term of office did I flout justice and the laws. But I am grown old. My enemies and detractors are dead. I shall die unavenged. Who will now retrieve my character?"

He moaned and lapsed into silence. Lamia replied—

"That man is prudent who neither hopes nor fears anything from the uncertain events of the future. Does it matter in the least what estimate men may form of us hereafter? We ourselves are after all our own witnesses, and our own judges. You must rely, Pontius Pilate, on the testimony you yourself bear to your own rectitude. Be content with your own personal

respect and that of your friends. For the rest, we know that mildness by itself will not suffice for the work of government. There is but little room in the actions of public men for that indulgence of human frailty which the philosophers recommend."

"We'll say no more at present," said Pontius. "The sulphurous fumes which rise from the Phlegræan plain are more powerful when the ground which exhales them is still warm beneath the sun's rays. I must hasten on. Adieu! But now that I have rediscovered a friend, I should wish to take advantage of my good fortune. Do me the favor, Lælius Lamia, to give me your company at supper at my house to-morrow. My house stands on the seashore, at the extreme end of the town in the direction of Misenum. You will easily recognize it by the porch which bears a painting representing Orpheus surrounded by tigers and lions, whom he is charming with the strains from his lyre.

"Till to-morrow, Lamia," he repeated, as he climbed once more into his litter. "To-morrow we will talk about Judæa."

The following day at the supper hour Lamia presented himself at the house of Pontius Pilate. Two couches only were in readiness for occupants. Creditably but simply equipped, the table held a silver service in which were set out beccaficos in honey, thrushes, oysters from the Lucrine lake, and lampreys from Sicily. As they proceeded with their repast, Pontius and Lamia interchanged inquiries with one another about their ailments, the symptoms of which they described at considerable length, mutually emulous of communicating the various remedies which had been recommended to them. Then, congratulating themselves on being thrown together once more at Baiæ, they vied with one another in praise of the beauty of that enchanting coast and the mildness of the climate they enjoyed. Lamia was enthusiastic about the charms of the courtesans who frequented the seashore laden with golden ornaments and trailing draperies of barbaric broidery. But the aged Procurator deplored the ostentation with which by means of trumpery jewels and filmy garments foreigners and even enemies of the empire beguiled the Romans of their gold. After a time they turned to the subject of the great engineering feats that had been accomplished in the country; the prodigious bridge constructed by Caius between Puteoli and Baiæ, and the canals which Augustus excavated to convey the waters of the ocean to Lake Avernus and the Lucrine lake.

"I also," said Pontius, with a sigh, "I also wished to set afoot public works of great utility. When, for my sins, I was appointed Governor of Judæa, I conceived the idea of furnishing Jerusalem with an abundant supply of pure water by means of an aqueduct. The elevation of the levels, the gradient for the brazen reservoirs to which the distribution pipes were to be fixed—I had gone into every detail, and decided everything for myself with the assistance of mechanical experts. I had drawn up regulations for the superintendents so as to prevent individuals from making unauthorized depredations. The architects and the workmen had their instructions. I gave orders for the commencement of operations. But far from viewing with satisfaction the construction of that conduit, which was intended to carry to their town upon its massive arches not only water but health, the inhabitants of Jerusalem gave vent to lamentable outcries. They gathered tumultuously together, exclaiming against the sacrilege and impiousness, and, hurling themselves upon the workmen, scattered the foundation stones. Can you picture to yourself, Lamia, a filthier set of barbarians? Nevertheless, Vitellius decided in their favor, and I received orders to put a stop to the work."

"It is a knotty point," said Lamia, "how far one is justified in devising things for the common weal against the will of the populace."

Pontius Pilate continued as though he had not heard this interruption.

"Refuse an aqueduct! What madness! But whatever is of Roman origin is distasteful to the Jews. In their eyes we are an unclean race, and our very presence appears a profanation to them. You will remember that they would never venture to enter the pretorium for fear of defiling themselves, and that I was consequently obliged to discharge my magisterial functions in an open-air tribunal on that marble pavement your feet so often trod.

"They fear us and they despise us. Yet is not Rome the mother and warden of all those peoples who nestle smiling upon her venerable bosom? With her eagles in the van, peace and liberty have been carried to the very confines of the universe. Those whom we have subdued we look on as our friends, and we leave those conquered races, nay, we secure to them the permanence of their customs and their laws. Did Syria, aforetime rent asunder by its rabble of petty kings, ever even begin to taste of peace and

prosperity until it submitted to the armies of Pompey? And when Rome might have reaped a golden harvest as the price of her good will, did she lay hands on the hoards that swell the treasuries of barbaric temples? Did she despoil the shrine of Cybele at Pessinus, or the Morimene and Cilician sanctuaries of Jupiter, or the temple of the Jewish god at Jerusalem? Antioch, Palmyra, and Apamea, secure despite their wealth, and no longer in dread of the wandering Arab of the desert, have erected temples to the genius of Rome and the divine Cæsar. The Jews alone hate and withstand us. They withhold their tribute till it is wrested from them, and obstinately rebel against military service."

"The Jews," replied Lamia, "are profoundly attached to their ancient customs. They suspected you, unreasonably I admit, of a desire to abolish their laws and change their usages. Do not resent it, Pontius, if I say that you did not always act in such a way as to disperse their unfortunate illusion. It gratified you, despite your habitual self-restraint, to play upon their fears, and more than once have I seen you betray in their presence the contempt with which their beliefs and religious ceremonies inspired you. You irritated them particularly by giving instructions for the sacerdotal garments and ornaments of their high priest to be kept in ward by your legionaries in the Antonine tower. One must admit that though they have never risen like us to an appreciation of things divine, the Jews celebrate rites which their very antiquity renders venerable."

Pontius Pilate shrugged his shoulders.

"They have very little exact knowledge of the nature of the gods," he said. "They worship Jupiter, yet they abstain from naming him or erecting a statue of him. They do not even adore him under the semblance of a rude stone, as certain of the Asiatic peoples are wont to do. They know nothing of Apollo, of Neptune, of Mars, nor of Pluto, nor of any goddess. At the same time, I am convinced that in days gone by they worshipped Venus. For even to this day their women bring doves to the altar as victims; and you know as well as I that the dealers who trade beneath the arcades of their temple supply those birds in couples for sacrifice. I have even been told that on one occasion some madman proceeded to overturn the stalls bearing these offerings, and their owners with them. The priests raised an outcry about it, and looked on it as a case of sacrilege. I am of opinion that

their custom of sacrificing turtle-doves was instituted in honor of Venus. Why are you laughing, Lamia?"

"I was laughing," said Lamia, "at an amusing idea which, I hardly know how, just occurred to me. I was thinking that perchance some day the Jupiter of the Jews might come to Rome and vent his fury upon you. Why should he not? Asia and Africa have already enriched us with a considerable number of gods. We have seen temples in honor of Isis and the dog-faced Anubis erected in Rome. In the public squares, and even on the race-courses, you may run across the Bona Dea of the Syrians mounted on an ass. And did you never hear how, in the region of Tiberius, a young patrician passed himself off as the horned Jupiter of the Egyptians, Jupiter Ammon, and in this disguise procured the favors of an illustrious lady who was too virtuous to deny anything to a god? Beware, Pontius, lest the invisible Jupiter of the Jews disembark some day on the quay at Ostia!"

At the idea of a god coming out of Judæa, a fleeting smile played over the severe countenance of the Procurator. Then he replied gravely—

"How would the Jews manage to impose their sacred law on outside peoples, when they are in a perpetual state of tumult amongst themselves as to the interpretation of that law? You have seen them yourself, Lamia, in the public squares, split up into twenty rival parties, with staves in their hands, abusing each other and clutching one another by the beard. You have seen them on the steps of the temple, tearing their filthy garments as a symbol of lamentation, with some wretched creature in a frenzy of prophetic exaltation in their midst. They have never realized that it is possible to discuss peacefully and with an even mind those matters concerning the divine which yet are hidden from the profane and wrapped in uncertainty. For the nature of the immortal gods remains hidden from us, and we cannot arrive at a knowledge of it. Though I am of opinion, none the less, that it is a prudent thing to believe in the providence of the gods. But the Jews are devoid of philosophy, and cannot tolerate any diversity of opinions. On the contrary, they judge worthy of the extreme penalty all those who on divine subjects profess opinions opposed to their law. And as, since the genius of Rome has towered over them, capital sentences pronounced by their own tribunals can only be carried out with the sanction of the proconsul or the procurator, they harry the Roman magistrate

at any hour to procure his signature to their baleful decrees, they besiege the pretorium with their cries of 'Death!' A hundred times, at least, have I known them, mustered, rich and poor together, all united under their priests, make a furious onslaught on my ivory chair, seizing me by the skirts of my robe, by the thongs of my sandals, and all to demand of me—nay, to exact from me—the death sentence on some unfortunate whose guilt I failed to perceive, and as to whom I could only pronounce that he was as mad as his accusers. A hundred times, do I say! Not a hundred, but every day and all day. Yet it was my duty to execute their law as if it were ours, since I was appointed by Rome not for the destruction, but for the upholding of their customs, and over them I had the power of the rod and the axe. At the outset of my term of office I endeavored to persuade them to hear reason; I attempted to snatch their miserable victims from death. But this show of mildness only irritated them the more; they demanded their prey, fighting around me like a horde of vultures with wing and beak. Their priests reported to Cæsar that I was violating their laws, and their appeals, supported by Vitellius, drew down upon me a severe reprimand. How many times did I long, as the Greeks used to say, to dispatch accusers and accused in one convoy to the crows!

"Do not imagine, Lamia, that I nourish the rancor of the discomfited, the wrath of the superannuated, against a people which in my person has prevailed against both Rome and tranquillity. But I foresee the extremity to which sooner or later they will reduce us. Since we cannot govern them, we shall be driven to destroy them. Never doubt it. Always in a state of insubordination, brewing rebellion in their inflammatory minds, they will one day burst forth upon us with a fury beside which the wrath of the Numidians and the mutterings of the Parthians are mere child's play. They are secretly nourishing preposterous hopes, and madly premeditating our ruin. How can it be otherwise, when, on the strength of an oracle, they are living in expectation of the coming of a prince of their own blood whose kingdom shall extend over the whole earth? There are no half measures with such a people. They must be exterminated. Jerusalem must be laid waste to the very foundation. Perchance, old as I am, it may be granted me to behold the day when her walls shall fall and the flames shall envelop her houses, when her inhabitants shall pass under the edge of the sword when salt shall be strown

on the place where once the temple stood. And in that day I shall at length be justified."

Lamia exerted himself to lead the conversation back to a less acrimonious note.

"Pontius," he said, "it is not difficult for me to understand both your long-standing resentment and your sinister forebodings. Truly, what you have experienced of the character of the Jews is nothing to their advantage. But I lived in Jerusalem as an interested onlooker, and mingled freely with the people, and I succeeded in detecting certain obscure virtues in these rude folk which were altogether hidden from you. I have met Jews who were all mildness, whose simple manners and faithfulness of heart recalled to me what our poets have related concerning the Spartan lawgiver. And you yourself, Pontius, have seen perish beneath the cudgels of your legionaries simple-minded men who have died for a cause they believed to be just without revealing their names. Such men do not deserve our contempt. I am saying this because it is desirable in all things to preserve moderation and an even mind. But I own that I never experienced any lively sympathy for the Jews. The Jewesses, on the contrary, I found extremely pleasing. I was young then, and the Syrian women stirred all my senses to response. Their ruddy lips, their liquid eyes that shone in the shade, their sleepy gaze pierced me to the very marrow. Painted and stained, smelling of nard and myrrh, steeped in odors, their physical attractions are both rare and delightful."

Pontius listened impatiently to these praises.

"I was not the kind of man to fall into the snares of the Jewish women," he said, "and since you have opened the subject yourself, Lamia, I was never able to approve of your laxity. If I did not express with sufficient emphasis formerly how culpable I held you for having intrigued at Rome with the wife of a man of consular rank, it was because you were then enduring heavy penance for your misdoings. Marriage from the patrician point of view is a sacred tie; it is one of the institutions which are the support of Rome. As to foreign women and slaves, such relations as one may enter into with them would be of little account were it not that they habituate the body to a humiliating effeminacy. Let me tell you that you have been too liberal in your offerings to the Venus of the Market-place; and what, above all, I blame in you is that you have not married in compliance with the law

and given children to the Republic, as every good citizen is bound to do."

But the man who had suffered exile under Tiberius was no longer listening to the venerable magistrate. Having tossed off his cup of Falernian, he was smiling at some image visible to his eye alone.

After a moment's silence he resumed in a very deep voice, which rose in pitch by little and little—

"With what languorous grace they dance, those Syrian women! I knew a Jewess at Jerusalem who used to dance in a poky little room, on a threadbare carpet, by the light of one smoky little lamp, waving her arms as she clanged her cymbals. Her loins arched, her head thrown back, and, as it were, dragged down by the weight of her heavy red hair, her eyes swimming with voluptuousness, eager, languishing, compliant, she would have made Cleopatra herself grow pale with envy. I was in love with her barbaric dances, her voice—a little raucous and yet so sweet—her atmosphere of incense, the semi-somnolescent state in which she seemed to live. I followed her everywhere. I mixed with the vile rabble of soldiers, conjurers, and extortioners with which she was surrounded. One day, however, she disappeared, and I saw her no more. Long did I seek her in disreputable alleys and taverns. It was more difficult to learn to do without her than to lose the taste for Greek wine. Some months after I lost sight of her, I learned by chance that she had attached herself to a small company of men and women who were followers of a young Galilean thaumaturgist. His name was Jesus; he came from Nazareth, and he was crucified for some crime, I don't quite know what. Pontius, do you remember anything about the man?"

Pontius Pilate contracted his brows, and his hand rose to his forehead in the attitude of one who probes the deeps of memory. Then after a silence of some seconds—

"Jesus?" he murmured, "Jesus—of Nazareth? I cannot call him to mind."

WHITE BREAD[1]

By ZONA GALE

EVERY one in the room had promised something. Mis' Tyrus Burns offered her receipt for filled cookies.

"My filled cookie receipt," she said, "is something that very, very few have ever got out of me. I give it to Mis' Bradford—when she moved away. I've give it to one or two of my kin—by word of mouth and not wrote down. And Carol Beck had it from me when she was married—wrote out on note-paper, formal—but understood to be a personal receipt and not general at all. This'll be the first time I've ever give in to make it public, and nothing on earth but the church carpet would make me now."

"Me either, with my Christmas cakes," said Mis' Arthur Port. "I've made 'em for fairs and bazaars and suppers, and give the material when I needed it for the children's shoes, but I feel like the time had come for the real supreme sacrifice. I'll put 'em in the book with the rest of you."

Mis' Older's salad-dressing, Mis' Eldred's fruit cordial, Mis' Regg's mince-meat, Mis' Emmons's pie-crust—these were all offered up. The basement dining-room of the church was filled with women that spring afternoon, and a spirit was moving among them like a little flame, kindling each one to giving. The place in which they were gathered, its furnace in the corner, its reed melodeon for the Sunday-school, its blackboards, and its locked cupboards filled with dishes which the women had earned when a like flame quickened—this place might have been an austere height where they were face to face with the ultimate purpose of giving, of being. For abruptly children's shoes, parlor curtains, the little hoard accumulating "over back" on a cupboard shelf became as nothing, and the need to be of use was on them all, like a cry involuntarily answered to a cry. That exquisite reflection of each in each was there, obeying strange laws of repetition and contagion—a gentle, positive power, infinitely

[1] From *Harper's Magazine*, July, 1916; copyright, 1916, by Harper & Brothers. Reprinted by permission of the author.

stronger than the negative infection of mob violence. It was as if the very church carpet which the receipt-book's sale must buy was but the homely means for the exercise of the mysterious force which moved them.

Save only one. Mis' Jane Mellish sat by the serving-pantry door, no more self-forgetful than when she was in her own kitchen.

"What's the book going to be called?" she had asked when they had voted to prepare it.

"The Katy Town First Church Ladies' Choice Receipt Book," they had finally decided.

"How can you call it that if it ain't all the ladies?" Jane had inquired further. "Some o' the ladies 'ain't got a choice receipt to their names nor their brains."

"Such as 'ain't can see to the printing," Mis' Tyrus Burns suggested. "Would you druther do that, Jane?" she added, tartly.

Jane's lips moved before she spoke—a little helpless way that they had, as if they were not equal to what they must do. "Who's going to write the dedication?" she asked.

No one had thought of a dedication, but it occurred to no one to question it. And the answer was inevitable.

"You'd ought to do that," they said to Jane. For who else of their number had ever published poems in the *Katy Town Epitome,* and whom else had its editor asked to "do special funeral and wedding write-ups"?

Jane nodded and hid her relief, and presently faced the question which all along she had been dreading:

"Now, bread. We'd ought to have some real special breads," they said. "Who's going to do them?"

Mis' Holmes's salt-rising bread, Mis' Jacobs's potato-bread, Mis' Grace's half-graham-and-half-rye—these were all offered. It was Mis' Tyrus Burns who said that which they were all thinking. She turned to Jane Mellish.

"Land! Jane," she said, "what it'd be to have your white-bread receipt for our volume!"

At this a hush fell, and they looked at Jane. For years her white-bread receipt had baffled them all. Nobody made white bread like Jane, and no one could find out how she made it—whether by flour or mixing, or, as some suspected, a home-made lard, or an unknown baking-powder, or a secret yeast packed in occasional boxes from Jane's relatives overseas. Whatever the

process or the component, she kept it. After a few rebuffs, Katy Town understood that the bread was Jane's prerogative. So they praised it to her, and experimented privately, and owned to one another their defeat. No one ever asked Jane any more. When Mis' Tyrus Burns did so, the silence was as if some one had spoken impertinently, or had made an historical reference too little known to be in good taste, or had quoted poetry.

"I'm going to compose an original dedication," Jane said, stiffly. "I guess ladies, that's my share."

Mis' Tyrus Burns sighed. " 'Most any of us," she said, "could stodge up a dedication to a book. Or we could even go without one, if we just had to. But that white-bread receipt of yours had ought to be in this book by rights, Jane Mellish, with a page all to itself."

Jane was silent. And when little Miss Cold, of her heart's goodness, relieved the moment with, "None of you offered to give my cream cake a page all by itself, I notice," every one laughed gratefully, and spoke no more of Jane's bread.

Jane walked down the street with the others, and she knew of what they were thinking. When she turned alone into her own street under the new buds, she went with a sick defiance, which her elaborate chatter about house-cleaning had only scotched. She left her door open to the friendly evening. The rooms were pleasant and commonplace in the westering light; her dress was to be changed, there was supper to get, her "clothes" had come home and were waiting to be sprinkled; but all these were become secondary to the disturbing thing.

"Mis' Tyrus Burns always did make things disagreeable for everybody," she thought. "Why should she say what bread should go into that book and what bread should stay out of it?"

Grandma Mellish was in the kitchen. She had an airy room of her own, and the "other" room was warm enough for comfort, but she sat in the kitchen. Sometimes she spent wakeful nights there.

"The other furniture bunts out at me," the old lady had said. "I see it's there. In the kitchen I can think things without truck having to be looked at all the time— Can't I sit where I want?" she would querulously demand of them.

Of late she had been querulous, too, about certain grinning faces on the cook-stove.

"They're makin' fun of what they think you be," she said once.

"You can stand there fryin' things, as moral as the minister, but you can't fool them faces. Dum 'em."

She sat in the kitchen now, patching a roller-towel. "Be they done clackin'?" she inquired, as Jane entered.

With the table-cloth in her hand, Jane stooped to her, told her about the book and the new church carpet. "They want I should put my white-bread receipt in," she said.

"The brass!" said Grandma Mellish, shrilly. "The brass!"

"Ain't it?" Jane said, softening to the sympathy, and stopped in her journey from cupboard to table to tell more of the meeting. The old woman listened; she was very bent, and to listen she looked over her stooped shoulder, her lips parted and moving in her effort to follow.

"The brass!" she said again. "That receipt's yours. *I* don't know how you make it, and I live in the same house with you. They'll want the hair off your head, next. What you goin' to do for their book?"

"It's my book, too," Jane said. "It's our book, I s'pose—it ain't all theirs. I'm going to write the dedication—giving it away on the front page, you know."

"Eh," said Grandma Mellish. "Well, just you make it flowery enough, and put in enough love and heaven, and that had ought to satisfy 'em. They'll want the clothes off your back, next." She broke off and shook her fist at the grinning faces on the cooking-stove. "What you smirkin' at, drat ye?" she inquired.

When supper was ready Jane went out on the porch, and there, in order to be away from the droning voice, she waited for Molly. Molly was late, but Jane was not hungry. The feeling of sick distaste had persisted, so that it was almost physical nausea; and this the old woman's words, which had at first soothed her, now someway intensified.

What was she caring so much about? she asked herself, indignantly. The bread receipt was hers, and that was all there was to it. It had been brought from the old country by her great-grandmother Osthelder, and had been handed down from mother to daughter. She remembered how jealously it had been guarded by her own mother, who had brought the receipt West with her when she married; and straightway in her home town her bread had become an amazement. Her mother had always made the bread for the Communion services, and so had Jane. In a fort-

night more Jane would be making bread for the spring Communion of the First Church.

"I do enough for them—I guess I do enough for them with my receipt," she thought. "Besides, it's Molly's. I 'ain't the right to give away what's Molly's."

Molly, coming from her school, seemed not at all disturbed about her rights. She had been teaching for two years, but she looked like a school-girl herself as she came round the house. She came bareheaded, save for a flutter of white veil on her hair; and she was always like one who is met at a day's beginning, and not at an ending. Only to-night there was a cloud on her face, no larger than the white space between her brows. But her mother saw.

"What is it, Molly?" she asked, but the girl laughed and ran upstairs and managed to keep off the question until supper was done. She had eaten nothing, however; and Jane had eaten nothing, because that sick sense of something wrong possessed her; only Grandma Mellish ate steadily. "What is it, Molly?" her mother asked again, when the old woman had finished.

"Well, mother darling," Molly said, "Ellen Burns has come back. At least she's sent word she's ready to take the school. They've offered it to me if I want to stay, but—"

"But what?" Jane said, sharply.

"I can't keep it," Molly answered. "It was her school. I was just a supply while she was sick. Now she's well, and she wants it back."

"What's that?" said Grandma Mellish. "Mis' Tyrus Burns's girl's got well? She wants back, after you doin' her work the best o' two years? What's the Board say to that?"

"They haven't met yet," Molly said. "But Nat says he knows I can stay if I like. Only—"

"Well, I should think so," said Grandma Mellish. "It's a good school. You stay. Wants back, does she? The brass!"

Molly looked at her mother, but Jane did not meet her eyes. It would be serious, this loss of the school. There were the three of them, and Molly was the breadwinner. If she were to get no other school next year . . . .

"You've got the good of the school to think of," Jane said. "You must be the best teacher, or Nat wouldn't be so sure of the Board. The good of the school's the main thing."

Molly shook her head. "I don't know about my being a better teacher," she said. "I think if they let me stay it'll be because Nat Commons is president of the Board."

"Nonsense!" her mother said, with vigor. "Just because he's taken you to drive once or twice. Anyway, what if it is so? You like him, don't you? You don't want you should hurt his feelings? If you go he'll think you're running away from him. You've got to think of everything."

Grandma Mellish was wiping her spectacles on her petticoat. "You better keep your cap set for Rufus Commons's son," she said. "He's got his pa's pocket and his grandad's jaw. Don't you leave him slip through your fingers."

Molly rose swiftly and went out on the porch. Her mother's eyes followed her, but she said nothing. As Jane turned back to her work, she was aware that her own dull sense of physical ill-being had been multiplied, and she felt a weight within, bearing down her chest, changing her breath.

"I've got to get a-hold of myself," she thought. "I guess I'll take a dose of something and get into the bed."

On her way down-town after supper Mis' Tyrus Burns went round by Jane Mellish's house. It was in her mind that she had been, after all, a little hard on Jane, and she thought of inviting her to go to a motion-picture show.

"Besides," she thought, "if I get round her right, mebbe I can make her see herself and her bread more general."

On the little front porch Molly was sitting alone. It was an exquisite time of daylight and shadow, and, for a third integrant delight, above the bare locust-trees came the moon.

"Gone to bed, has she?" said Mis' Tyrus Burns. "I don'no' but it *was* a hard meeting for her."

Molly's look questioned her.

"That bread business," Mis' Burns said, briefly. "Molly, look here. Can't you bring something to bear?"

"You mean for her to give the receipt?" Molly asked.

"Certain," said Mis' Burns. "Or don't you want she should do it?"

"She must do as she likes," Molly told her. "I oughtn't to influence her."

"But she *says* it's for you she's keeping it," Mis' Burns reminded her. "She says it's been handed from mother to daughter

for generations, and she won't give away your birthright. She says—"

"Does she say that?" asked Molly.

Mis' Tyrus Burns moved nearer to the girl. The soft, thick face of the woman was momentarily twitched out of drawing. "She don't guess it," she said, "but I bet you she's just hiding herself in under that for a reason." She did not add aloud what she went down the street saying to herself: "Pride's pride, and sin's sin. And I declare I don'no' which Janes Mellish is et by."

Molly looked after Mis' Burns. "She never said a word about Ellen coming home," Molly thought. "But my! how she must wish I was out of the way."

The moon was free of the locust-trees when the gate opened again, and Molly, still alone on the porch, greeted Nat Commons. This great, fine creature, president of the Katy Town School Board, bass singer in the First Church choir, was on his way to his night's work as foreman in the *Katy Town Epitome* composing-room. The two did not shake hands. At the other extreme of the gamut which makes hand-shaking a form lay Katy Town, where too much hand-shaking might denote that "something was meant."

Nat set one foot on the step, leaned on his knee, and looked across at her. "I come to help you make up your mind," he said.

Through Molly Mellish went a faint, delicious ripple.

All these months she had been running away, with the certainty that his step was a little way behind, patient, unhurrying. To-night it was as if, abruptly, she felt on her cheek the breath of the runner.

"How do you know my mind isn't made up now?" she asked.

"Then," Nat said, "maybe I come to help you make it over—and make it right."

He leaned on his knee, his large hands loosely clasped. His powerful young frame and his young, boyish face cut off from Molly her vision of the street, of the rest of the world. There was about him a sense of enormous capacity for work, for physical accomplishment, which drew her, as knightly powers to kill drew women once.

"You stay!" he said. "Keep the school!"

She shook her head. "I've told you how I feel," she answered.

"You *can* stay," he said to her. "You *can* stay! You stay."

"If Ellen wants the school back," said Molly, "then she's got to have it back. The Board told her she could."

"Any time inside a year," he reminded her. "Well, it's two years."

"But it took her two years to get well!" cried Molly. "And now she wants to be here. And her mother's alone."

"Her mother's got money," Nat Commons argued. "Ellen don't need the school. You do. And that ought to decide it, because one of you is just as good a teacher as the other one."

Molly was silent. All this was true. After all, must she worry, and stint her own mother, and herself face the city with its doubtful chances, just because Ellen Burns had taken it in her head to have back the school?

With no warning at all, Nat Commons came in the dusk of the porch and stooped and laid his cheek against her cheek. "Molly," he said, "I guess you know, don't you? Do you want me?"

She turned her head toward him never so little, but it proved to be enough. It was the moment when innumerable past lines drew together.

"You stay here," he said, in a little while. "It won't be more than a year till we can go to housekeeping—the four of us. Only, till then you and I had ought to be where we can see each other. You stay here, and keep the school."

But, Molly told herself through the night, to stay there without work was impossible. To find work in Katy Town was equally impossible. Why should not Ellen Burns come back and live there quietly until the year was past, and then take back the school?—Ellen Burns, to whom the salary was not important; Ellen Burns, who had no trousseau to buy. . . .

A little while after dawn she heard her mother walk through the hall. Molly dressed and went down. Jane was outside the kitchen door, standing idle in the first sun. The morning was upon her, with its pathetic sense of wide-eyed, open-handed promise. The day still hoped for everything from the world. The time was like a child running into a room where there was evil.

"Haven't you been sleeping, mother?" Molly asked.

"Not very well," Jane confessed. "What was Sarah Burns saying to you out on the porch last night?" she added.

"She wanted I should speak to you about your white-bread receipt," Molly told her. "Mother, why not let them have it?"

Jane spoke out with a passion which amazed her daughter.

"Why don't Sarah Burns sell her mahogany and her silver tea-set away from Ellen?" she cried. "I 'ain't no such things for you. Everybody in town's crazy over my bread receipt. You'd be the fifth generation that's kep' it secret. I won't give it. It's all we've got. I've made up my mind."

Molly hesitated, and risked it. "If it's on my account, mother—" she said, slowly, and caught the swift look in her mother's eyes, and could not steal away her defenses—"do just as you think you ought, dear," she said only.

Jane's lips thinned and tightened. "They's no 'ought' about this," she said. "It's bigger than 'ought'. It's tradition."

Molly laughed out. "That's beautiful, mother," she said. "Tell me," she added, "did you know what Nat said to me on the porch last night, after Mis' Burns went?"

Jane's look questioned, and the girl's look answered.

"You knew what I'd say to him, didn't you, mother?" said Molly.

"I hope I knew," Jane said. "Oh, Molly! And you'll keep the school?"

"I guess so," said Molly.

Grandma Mellish appeared in the kitchen doorway. "Jane!" she shouted, needlessly. "Is they any of your white bread old enough to toast?"

Jane frowned. "I'm going to hate the name o' my white bread," she said. "Yes—they's some in the under crock. Let's hurry breakfast," she added to Molly. "I got to be down to the *Epitome* office to pick the cook-book cover."

The *Epitome* office was up a flight of sunless stairs, and when Jane reached there toward one o'clock, only the foreman, Nat Commons, was in the composing-room. He strode down between the forms, tying on his ticking apron, and upset Jane's simple dignity by throwing his bare arms about her and kissing her.

"Molly *will!*" he cried, his head up as if he were singing it.

"So would I if I was Molly," Jane said, primly, and frowned to show how much she was at ease.

"And she's just about made up her mind to keep the school," he added. "Hold her up to that—Mother Mellish!"

"Hold her up to it yourself," Jane warned him, "or what's the use of being president of the Board *and* her husband-to-be? Show me some cook-book covers."

"The Board don't meet till a week from Saturday," he added,

while he brought the paper. "She's got till then to make up her mind."

"Oh, she'll stay," Jane said. "Don't you think this brown's real tasty? And see 't you give me a nice border around my dedication. I laid awake last night and got it half wrote."

The others of the committee arriving, the cook-book took shape before their eyes. It was Nat Commons's ardent hope to give them a different tail-piece for every page, and indefatigably he brought them proofs of dolphins and torches and serpents and ram's horns.

"Land, what's this?" Mis' Arthur Port demanded. "Looks like two loaves of bread. Jane, this must be to go to the foot of your white-bread receipt, sure enough."

"That's an open book," Jane said, tartly. "What makes your jokes so heavy, Martha Port? Your own heft, mebbe."

"Well, we've all been thinking and talking about you and your bread so much since yesterday, I suppose I *have* got bread on the brain," Mis' Port replied, humbly.

"Must be a surprise to have somethin' on the brain," Jane offered. "Now, black ink or gold, ladies?" she wanted to know.

"Black ink," voted Mis' Arthur Port, with sudden energy. "We can't stand the expense of the gold with some folks holding back stingy on the book's insides!"

Back in her kitchen Jane Mellish turned with definite relief for the sympathy and indorsement of Grandma Mellish. The old woman was before the stove again.

"What do you think?" Jane shouted, sitting on the wood-box beside her. "Them women can't leave me alone. They keep harping away on my bread receipt."

"Hey?" said Grandma Mellish.

Jane said this once more, her indignation a little touched with impatience.

"Hey?" said Grandma Mellish, in exactly the same tone. This was evidently one of her ways of entertainment. She had whole days when it was almost impossible to communicate with her, though nothing intervened save her unvaried interrogative.

"My white bread, my bread receipt!" Jane screamed, determined on sympathy at any price. "They want to get my white bread away from me."

"Hey?" said Grandma Mellish.

But when Jane had turned from her, despairing of *rapport* here, the old woman relented.

"Tell 'em," she said, sharply—"tell 'em to go plumb to thunder. Tell the hull church to go plumb to thunder. Tell 'em nothin' in their book is fit to eat at a heathens' picnic. Tell 'em you wouldn't buy it for nothin' to a junk-shop. Tell 'em to go right along, plumb to thunder, afoot or ahoss-back—"

"There, there, there!" Jane cried, and hurried from the room.

"Hey?" said Grandma Mellish, and began all over again.

Molly found her mother with tears on her face.

"Mother!" Molly cried. "You're being miserable over that old bread. It isn't worth it!"

"You go down-town and see if you can find something for supper," Jane said only, and drew away.

"Nobody on earth understands just the way I am," Jane thought, bitterly. "Not even Molly. What do they have me make the Communion bread for, if it ain't something everybody can't do? I've a good notion to tell 'em I won't never make another loaf for 'em."

Nevertheless, on the night before Communion, two weeks later, Jane "set sponge," as usual, for her bread. It was a task in which she always delighted. She brought special pans, kept scrupulously for nothing else; she measured and weighed her flour; for years she had dissolved her yeast in the same blue cup. She moved among her ingredients like a priestess. The time bore less the flavor of a task than of a ceremony.

Nat Commons dropped in the kitchen on his way to the School Board Meeting.

"I'm going to stay to it just long enough to see 'em vote to keep you in the school," he said to Molly. "Then I've got to hike for the office. We've got to get the cook-book out by Monday noon."

"I haven't said I'd take the school even if I got it," Molly reminded him.

"You will, though," Nat told her. "It'll be in the *Katy Town Epitome* in the morning, and then you'll have to."

Molly went with him to the door, and in the dusk two women were entering—Mis' Tyrus Burns and Mis' Arthur Port. They went by her into the kitchen. When Nat had gone, Molly sat on the porch. The door stood opened to the spring night, and she could hear the voices of the women.

"My land!" Mis' Tyrus Burns said, "if Jane ain't setting her white-bread sponge! Want we should shut our eyes, Jane?"

"Why else did you come to this door, if you didn't know that?" Jane countered, intent on her stirring.

"Want we should shut our eyes?" Mis' Port insisted.

"You can watch every move I make, if you want," Jane serenely offered.

"Well," said Mis' Burns, "we don't, I'm sure. We got something better to look at."

She produced the proofs of the receipt-book, and the two turned the leaves while Jane kept on at her work. She knew that her dedication would be there in type, in the women's hands.

"Leona Grace," said Mis' Tyrus Burns, "and her cottage-cheese receipt. She don't set it on the stove at all. I'll bet it ain't fit to put on bread."

"Nor Mis' Kent Carter's cream potatoes, either," Mis' Port contributed. "Sprinkles dry flour on 'em, in the skillet! The idear! Anything to make work easy for Mis' Carter. She's ashamed to fuss decent."

"I don't care what anybody says," observed Mis' Burns. "My mustard pickles is something elegant. They took me three whole forenoons, letting the sauce set and adding in gradual. No shirkin' there."

"Me, either, on my tartare sauce," Mis' Port supplied. "Three-quarters of a cupful of oil, one drop at a time, stirring constant. You can't do it right, with the chopped stuff and all, in a minute under two hours. Onless you slight somewheres."

"Same with Mis' Bold's German kisses," Mis' Burns explained. "She beats 'em, and beats 'em, and beats 'em. One hour by the clock, that woman beats 'em. I'm crazy to try that receipt."

Jane, beating steadily at her sponge, stood this as long as she could. "What do you think of the dedication, ladies?" she asked, finally.

The two women turned to her with humbly admiring faces.

"It's beautiful, Jane—just beautiful," Mis' Burns told her. "There couldn't no one have expressed it nicer."

"I said that when I read it over," Mis' Port added. "I said, 'She's done it, this time. Where anybody else would have used one word, Jane Mellish has used two.' We're all real proud, Jane."

"Hold onto your bread receipt if you want to," Mis' Burns told Jane. "You've earned the right to be stingy till the day of your death, *I* say."

"What do you do?" Mis' Port asked her, curiously. "Set around, and lay awake nights, and get points, and then write 'em up?"

"Something like that," Jane returned, modestly.

"Whether it's white bread or whether it's poetry," said Mis' Tyrus Burns, with a laugh, "Jane keeps it to herself."

She opened the book and displayed a page blank.

"Thirty-one pages of food and dedication and title," she observed, "besides the cover. And thirty-two pages in the book altogether. They's just one blank page for your receipt, Jane. Better use it up."

Jane beat at her sponge.

"I should think," Mis' Port put in, "you'd be ashamed to withhold so from the Lord, Jane."

Jane beat at her sponge. "The Lord wouldn't earn a cent more by my receipt being in," she answered.

"Earnin' money ain't all the Lord thinks about," Mis' Burns returned, tartly. "They is such a thing as sacrificin' for a sweet savor."

"You tend to your own sweet savors, Sarah Burns," Jane flashed, "and I'll tend to mine."

"Nat Commons has promised 'em for the Monday meeting," Mis' Port put in. "Mebbe Jane can see light by then. Some do, give 'em time."

Jane beat at her sponge.

Molly, on the side porch, felt dull wonder that any one could be so interested in the matters of which these women talked. As for her, she wanted her thought free to go to Nat and to plan the details of her simple wedding finery! Beside her own sharp sense of this muslin and that silk to buy, her mother's passionate guarding of the secret of the bread of four generations seemed to Molly as insubstantial and unallied to the realities as was the hair wreath in the parlor.

She strolled down to the gate, set between flowering currants. The women emerged, and Mis' Port went through the garden to her own house. Mis' Tyrus Burns lingered.

"I got a letter from Ellen to-day," she said to Molly, "and her picture."

"How does she look?" Molly asked, and tried not to show her slow-mounting discomfort at this mention of Ellen Burns.

"Walk along with me and I'll show it to you," Ellen's mother said.

They went on together, Mis' Burns talking of Ellen. Her illness had left her; she had been visiting in the mountains; she had taken a ten-days' motor trip. As this woman talked, Molly looked at her with attention. She was a large, pale creature, with fat cheeks and shapeless ears dragged down by old ear-rings. She wore a rough coat, too tight across the chest, and there her large-veined hand was outspread. She had on a heavy wedding-ring, which cut her thick finger. Her hat, trimmed in front with a weight of short, straight tips, bore down upon her forehead like a constant experience. Her footsteps were heavy and flat on the board sidewalk. She was an ugly woman.

"Ellen's been a great comfort to me," she said many times. "As a little girl she was always a great help to me."

"It's fine to know she's well again," Molly ventured.

"Sometimes I think it's enough to know she's in the world and well, even if I never see her again," said Mis' Tyrus Burns.

She lived alone, and when she had taken the key from the saucer of a plant they went into the quiet rooms, which yielded nothing to one entering. The old furniture was crystallized in some motionless medium. The rooms paid no attention to any one.

Ellen's picture was in the parlor. There the hush was more prominent than the furnishings. All had been as it was for a very long time. Old reasons for arrangement had disappeared, but the arrangements stayed. The clock was wrong. The crayon portraits were almost certainly of those no longer living. There was an odor, not of padded carpeting, not of damp wall-paper paste, not of chimney-soot, but an odor unallied to rooms where folks go and come.

"Have a seat," said Mis' Tyrus Burns. "I think you'll find this the most comfortable chair. It's the one my husband was always partial to."

She brought Ellen's photograph. The picture showed a pretty, open face, with the touch of settled sadness which ill-health gives.

"She's an awful good girl," said Mis' Tyrus Burns, "and she was always a good baby. She was never much of any trouble to me. When she was a little thing I use' to take her with me to

Ladies' Aid meetings. She knew how to set still. She never teased for anything. She was always a child you could easy give to understand things. She never took advantage. . . . When she got through the high school I wanted she should stay home here with us. But no, her pa wanted her to have something. I guess he never did know what. And after that she taught till she got sick. I feel she's been give back to me from the dead. For a long time I just about knew what happiness was every time I said over, 'She ain't dead.' Yes, it's a good photograph. Her waist draws a little mite at the shoulder-seam, though, don't you think so?"

Molly listened. All her life she had known Mis' Tyrus Burns. She might have known that Mis' Tyrus Burns felt all this for Ellen, but to hear it said was like uncovering a new relationship.

Mis' Burns set the picture in its place before the ebony horse which forever stood with one uplifted foot.

"Molly," she said, without preface, "I want you to know I 'ain't a mite of feeling about you not giving up the school to Ellen—after two years so."

"Who said I wasn't going to give it up?" Molly asked.

"Why," said Mis' Burns, "I took it for granted. Nobody in their senses would. You want your school—and it's yours to keep a-hold of. Ellen 'ain't no claim."

"But she won't come back here without a position?" Molly asked.

"No," her mother said; "she'll go somewheres else."

"But you want her to come back!" Molly cried.

"That ain't it," said Mis' Burns.

She took down the photograph again, and wiped a dust-speck from the face. Then she moved about the parlor, touching this or that to rights—picking up a red berry fallen from the asparagus in the fireplace, finding a raveling on the rug. Her hands had done much hard work, and they were shiny, and dark between the cords. Her hair was somewhat fallen, and the throat of her dress was badly fastened. In the midst of her plain and paltry belongings this woman moved, as instinct with wistfulness, with hope, with resignation, as if she had been any beautiful being.

And abruptly, as she looked, Molly Mellish seemed to pass over into the woman, and to become identical with her. And then it was something more. For, with no harbinger of the miracle within, the girl suddenly knew all the wonder of wanting a blessing

for the woman more than for herself—just as if Mis' Tyrus Burns had been some one whom she very much loved. Molly had wanted things in this way for her mother. As a matter of course, she would rather that a heritage should come to her mother than to herself. And now this process of preference was simply extended, and, quite surprisingly, it embraced Mis' Tyrus Burns.

Molly rose. "I haven't told anybody yet what I'll do," she said.

She never forgot the leap of hope which flamed for a moment in the mother's eyes.

"Why I never dreamed but what you'd keep the place!" Mis' Tyrus Burns said. "Anybody would."

Molly walked home in no agitation, no debate. Her mother was not in the kitchen. Grandma Mellish sat there, shaving sweet-flag.

"Your ma's up-stairs," she said. "She wants you should go on up."

When her bread-pan was covered beside the stove, Jane, sitting in the kitchen to pore over the receipt-book, turned straight to the dedication. There it was, in a border of pine-cones and quill pens and unicorns.

Some one has said that we are what we eat. It is well known that food makes people what we are. The idea that getting up a meal is a moral responsibility is in every one's head, more or less. As the poet Pope has said: "Who can live without cooks?"

God commanded the first pair to eat of the fruit of the fields. They probably did so for some time. Did they cook it? We can only surmise. The likelihood is that they did not. Who can tell but what if Eve had been able to cook right she wouldn't have been reduced to raw apples, and so her and Adam not been driven from the garden with a flaming sword?

Mother! What sacred feelings pack that name! Who can remember their mother without remembering some of what she could cook? It is a part of the divine something which hems mothers round.

In making up this little book, therefore, we have a purpose much wider than mere palatableness. Our roots go deeper. We make this Receipt Book an offering to the Ideal, a sweet savor and flavor unto the Lord. JANE MELLISH.

Jane touched the book lovingly. The time had been when she had dreamed of seeing her name between the covers of a

book. Up-stairs, in an old trunk, lay the pile of thin paper, just as it had come back to her from a publisher, years ago. But now here was her name, almost on the title-page of the book, and quite as it would have looked at the end of that book's dedication.

"See, grandma!" she cried, as the old woman came into the kitchen.

"I can't see," said Grandma Mellish; "but if you've stuck it full of love and God they'll think they like it. Did you?"

"I'll read it to you," Jane said, and did so, though she knew that the old woman could not hear. Jane loved to read it through.

"'—an offering to the Ideal, a sweet savor and flavor unto the Lord,'" she ended.

"Set around here where them dum faces can't see me," Grandma Mellish said only. "You didn't give 'em your white-bread receipt, did you?" she demanded, shrilly.

"I should say not," answered the author of the dedication.

"Them aid societies is a brassy lot," the old woman volunteered. "Allus got their claws out for somebody's snuff-box."

"Do you like the dedication, grandma?" Jane asked.

"It's good enough, what there is of it," said Grandma Mellish, "and there's enough of it, such as it is."

"It's 'most like I'd wrote a book," said Jane, fingering the pages. "If I'd had a poem in here, now—"

Suddenly she sat straight and stared down at the leaves. She had come on the blank page, the thirty-second page, at the book's end. Why not? Why should she not have a poem of her own there?

Her sewing-machine stood in the kitchen. In its top drawer was an old account-book, long and narrow, which just fitted in above the spools and the button-box. It was scribbled in pencil—pages of verses. They had been written while fires were kindling, while flatirons were heating, while the potato-water was boiling, while Jane was waiting for her bread to "come out of the oven." Only within the last few years had Jane begun to face the fact that she should never publish a book of poems.

Her thought went now to some verses which of late she had set down at the news of the death of a little child in the neighborhood. These were, she felt, the best that she had ever written. They had come in real stress of feeling, at dawn, when she and Molly had returned from that house of mourning. She found the verses, read them over by the light of the bracket-lamp:

Oh, he was born the other day,
  And now he is no more.
He never lived a word to say
  And still he is no more.

You might think, "Why was he let live
  If he no larger grew?"
O little life, e'en you can give
  More than we ever knew.

God has us roses and us buds,
  And when we come to die
The heavenly manna and bright foods
  Will be for you and I.

"I might call it 'Manna,'" she thought. "Then that would make it real appropriate for a receipt-book."

She hesitated, turning the leaves of the account-book. This poem she had meant to send to a magazine. It had been years since she had tried to have anything published, save in the *Epitome*. And this was the best that she could do. But why not give this poem to the church book—"an offering to the Ideal, a sweet savor and flavor unto the Lord"?

She stooped to twitch over her pan of bread the old red-cotton table-cover with which it was protected. And from the base of her cooking-range leaped out the grinning faces stamped in the cast iron—the leering, mocking faces which so haunted Grandma Mellish, which looked now at Jane with a world of derisive understanding in their pointed eyes.

"You're using that poem for a sop," went through Jane's mind, as sharp as words.

"No such thing!" she said, aloud, and stood erect, in some strange defiance.

"Hey?" said Grandma Mellish.

"I'm going up-stairs," Jane said, abruptly. "Where's Molly? When she comes, you tell her to come on up."

When Molly went up, she found her mother sitting in her room, without a lamp. It was a mean little room, whose china wash-bowl and pitcher were the only high lights.

Jane had meant to turn to Molly and to put upon her the burden of the final decision which now, at last, she was facing. But, instead, Molly ran to her and sat upon her knee, like a little girl.

"Mother," she said, "I'm going to give up my school to Ellen Burns."

"What on earth for?" Jane cried, sharply.

"So her mother can have her here," said Molly. "Her mother's alone—she's alone. I never thought of it that way."

"What about *me* being alone?" Jane demanded.

"But I'll be living right here after Nat and I are married," Molly told her, "so what if I do go away for a little while first? And maybe, if Ellen don't come home now, she'll get something somewhere else and not come at all. And her mother's alone."

"But—" Jane said, and stopped.

"Oh, mother!" Molly cried. "If you knew how light and good I feel about it! I'm going down to the *Epitome* office and tell Nat to get it in the paper that way, to-morrow morning."

"You going to the *Epitome* office? Now?" Jane asked.

Molly rose, and Jane sprang up and stood beside her.

"Mother," said Molly, "I don't know whether you'll know what I mean. But I'd rather Ellen would have the school than to have it myself. Isn't that funny?"

"Wait," said Jane; "I'm coming down."

She brushed at her hair before her dark mirror, and on an invisible cushion found a brooch. They groped down the stairway and into the kitchen. By the stove Grandma Mellish sat sleeping, sweet-flag scattered on her apron.

"I won't be long, mother," Molly said.

"I'm coming, too," said Jane.

At the *Epitome* office Nat Commons looked in Molly's eyes as he listened. "Just put in the paper that Ellen Burns is well again and is coming to take her school," Molly said.

It may have been that her positiveness bore its own mark of finality; it may have been that his love of her bred understanding. He said little. He glanced swiftly round the city room, and, seeing only bent, absorbed heads and green eye-shades, he kissed Molly, in the comparative shadow of the telephone-booth.

"Nat!" said Jane Mellish.

Her tone was so sharp that the city editor himself looked up.

"I want to put something more in the cook-book," said Jane. "Is they time?"

There was time. Nat took her into the composing-room. By his littered desk Jane stood erect, once more the priestess.

"It's to go on that blank page. Put it down word for word, just exactly like I say it," said Jane. "It's a receipt for bread."

Every one in Katy Town remembers the hours which followed. It was on this night that Mis' Arthur Port's youngest son was hurt in the quarry and brought home to her house to die.

On her return from the office Jane Mellish was confronted with the news. Mis' Port being their nearest neighbor, the duties of the night automatically devolved upon Jane and Molly. Molly ran across the garden to Mis' Port's house, and Jane, about to follow, suddenly stood in stupefaction and looked down at her bread. She thought for a moment, and went close to Grandma Mellish.

"Grandma," she said, "you don't sleep good. Would you just as soon lay here on the settle to-night?"

"Hey?" said Grandma Mellish.

"I want you should mix the bread, the Communion bread," Jane said. Her face had turned white, and she bent over the old woman, and had her by the arm. "Now listen: You'll keep wakin' up like you always do. And it has to be mixed every two hours. Mix it at ten, and again at twelve, and again at two, and again at four. Can you do that? I'll be home to get it into loaves at six. Can you do that?"

"Tarnation nonsense," said Grandma Mellish.

Jane stooped nearer. In the light of the high bracket-lamp she was again the priestess, beside some withered sibyl, before an altar-fire.

"Hush!" said Jane. "Grandma! That's the secret. That's what makes it better than anybody's else's bread. Can you do that?"

"Humph!" said Grandma Mellish. "Yes, I can. I can do that. More fool me!"

Jane said it over to her patiently. Then, hearing on the board walk the tramp of the bearers, she ran through the garden to Mis' Port's house. A sense of fear and solemnity was on her. Twice in an hour she had said aloud the secret of the four generations; and Mis' Arthur Port's son was being brought home on a stretcher.

Communion day in the Katy Town First Church was a day of deep religious and social import. On that day there seemed

some return of all the rich reticence of the more formal church interiors, now long lost in democratizations. For the white-cloth-covered table, the tall necks of the decanters, the silver goblets, and the heaped flowers in themselves gave to the time a sense of the ceremonial. Moreover, the service was held an hour earlier, when the slanting sun fell on the ingrain carpet in unwonted ways.

In the congregation, gathering in silence, came Jane Mellish and Molly. They were both pale from a long vigil. The boy had died toward dawn, and, having done all that was required of them, they had breakfasted and dressed, and had come down early with the Communion bread.

Broken in square bits, the two loaves were piled on silver plates. White, firm, light, its delicate crust delicately browned, Jane saw her bread borne down the aisle with the formal sweep of an elder's arm. She tasted anxiously, and bowed her head on the folded handkerchief in her gloved hand; and her consecration was all compact of thankfulness. Never had her bread been more delectable.

Mis' Tyrus Burns, whose pew was behind Jane's, leaned forward as the hymnals rustled.

"I declare, Jane Mellish," she whispered, "that bread is sacrilegious, it's so near without a fault. It's a wicked crime it ain't in the book."

The receipt-book was announced in the church "notices"—"a volume of the choicest receipts of all the ladies of the congregation," the minister said, and Mis' Tyrus Burns poked Jane slyly.

"Ain't you shamed to death and ashes?" Mis' Burns whispered.

Jane smiled, and found the hymn number, and sang. At the close of the service they all came forward, as they always did, to welcome the new members with the hand of fellowship and to praise Jane for her bread. She listened, only half hearing. And when this was done, she walked home with a strange, sweet singing in all her being. She had done it—she had done it! Something right had come into the world through her. There was no dim prescience of the time when the birth of a right should be in itself a thanksgiving. Jane's joy was innocently bound up with her own personal triumph.

"It was a grand Communion," she said, fervently, to Molly.

"Oh, mother," Molly said, "Mis' Tyrus Burns *kissed* me!"

In the kitchen, Grandma Mellish sat, trim in her white apron for the Sabbath.

"Many out?" she demanded.

"Yes. A big congregation," Jane answered.

"How'd Communion go?" asked Grandma Mellish.

"Same as usual, I guess," Jane told her.

"Many confess?" the old lady wished to know.

"One," Jane told her, complacently, "and two letters."

Grandma Mellish hesitated. "How was the bread?" she inquired, at last.

"Some said it was the best I ever made," Jane answered, proudly. "You deserve the praise of that, grandma."

"Do—do I?" the old woman said. "The best bread you ever made, eh? The brass o' that—the brass! Listen here."

She came over to Jane, and she was laughing soundlessly in a way that moved her shoulders and head.

"Listen here!" said Grandma Mellish. "I mixed that bread at ten o'clock last night, and then it was never touched again till you come home at daylight. I told you it was all tarnation nonsense. I only mixed it up once the whole night long."

A MUNICIPAL REPORT[1]

By O. HENRY

The cities are full of pride,
  Challenging each to each—
This from her mountainside,
  That from her burthened beach.
—R. KIPLING.

Fancy a novel about Chicago or Buffalo, let us say, or Nashville, Tennessee! There are just three big cities in the United States that are "story cities"—New York, of course, New Orleans, and, best of the lot, San Francisco.

—FRANK NORRIS.

EAST is East, and West is San Francisco, according to Californians. Californians are a race of people; they are not merely inhabitants of a State. They are the Southerners of the West. Now, Chicagoans are no less loyal to their city; but when you ask them why, they stammer and speak of lake fish and the new Odd Fellows' Building. But Californians go into detail.

Of course they have, in the climate, an argument that is good for half an hour while you are thinking of your coal bills and heavy underwear. But as soon as they come to mistake your silence for conviction, madness comes upon them, and they picture the city of the Golden Gate as the Bagdad of the New World. So far, as a matter of opinion, no refutation is necessary. But, dear cousins all (from Adam and Eve descended), it is a rash one who will lay his finger on the map and say: "In this town there can be no romance—what could happen here?" Yes, it is a bold and a rash deed to challenge in one sentence history, romance, and Rand and McNally.

NASHVILLE.—A city, port of delivery, and the capital of the State of Tennessee, is on the Cumberland River and on the N. C. & St. L. and the L. & N. railroads. This city is regarded as the most important educational center in the South.

---

[1] From *Strictly Business*, by O. Henry; copyright, 1911, by Doubleday, Page and Company. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

I stepped off the train at 8 P.M. Having searched the thesaurus in vain for adjectives, I must, as a substitution, hie me to comparison in the form of a recipe.

Take of London fog 30 parts; malaria 10 parts; gas leaks 20 parts; dewdrops gathered in a brickyard at sunrise 25 parts; odor of honeysuckle 15 parts. Mix.

The mixture will give you an approximate conception of a Nashville drizzle. It is not so fragrant as a moth-ball nor as thick as pea-soup; but 'tis enough—'twill serve.

I went to a hotel in a tumbril. It required strong self-suppression for me to keep from climbing to the top of it and giving an imitation of Sidney Carton. The vehicle was drawn by beasts of a bygone era and driven by something dark and emancipated.

I was sleepy and tired, so when I got to the hotel I hurriedly paid it the fifty cents it demanded (with approximate lagniappe, I assure you). I knew its habits; and I did not want to hear it prate about its old "marster" or anything that happened "befo' de wah."

The hotel was one of the kind described as "renovated." That means twenty thousand dollars' worth of new marble pillars, tiling, electric lights and brass cuspidors in the lobby, and a new L. & N. time-table and a lithograph of Lookout Mountain in each one of the great rooms above. The management was without reproach, the attention full of exquisite Southern courtesy, the service as slow as the progress of a snail and as good-humored as Rip Van Winkle. The food was worth traveling a thousand miles for. There is no other hotel in the world where you can get such chicken livers *en brochette*.

At dinner I asked a negro waiter if there was anything doing in town. He pondered gravely for a minute, and then replied: "Well, boss, I don't really reckon there's anything at all doin' after sundown."

Sundown had been accomplished; it had been drowned in the drizzle long before. So that spectacle was denied me. But I went forth upon the streets in the drizzle to see what might be there.

It is built on undulating grounds; and the streets are lighted by electricity at a cost of $32,470 per annum.

As I left the hotel there was a race riot. Down upon me charged a company of freedmen, or Arabs, or Zulus, armed with

—no, I saw with relief that they were not rifles, but whips. And I saw dimly a caravan of black, clumsy vehicles; and at the reassuring shouts: "Kyar you anywhere in the town, boss, fuh fifty cents," I reasoned that I was merely a "fare" instead of a victim.

I walked through long streets, all leading uphill. I wondered how those streets ever came down again. Perhaps they didn't until they were "graded." On a few of the "main streets" I saw lights in stores here and there; saw street-cars go by conveying worthy burghers hither and yon; saw people pass engaged in the art of conversation; and heard a burst of semi-lively laughter issuing from a soda-water and ice-cream parlor. The streets other than "main" seemed to have enticed upon their borders houses consecrated to peace and domesticity. In many of them lights shone behind discreetly drawn window shades; in a few, pianos tinkled orderly and irreproachable music. There was, indeed, little "doing." I wished I had come before sundown. So I returned to my hotel.

In November, 1864, the Confederate General Hood advanced against Nashville, where he shut up a National force under General Thomas. The latter then sallied forth and defeated the Confederates in a terrible conflict.

All my life I have heard of, admired, and witnessed the fine marksmanship of the South in its peaceful conflicts in the tobacco-chewing regions. But in my hotel a surprise awaited me. There were twelve bright, new, imposing, capacious brass cuspidors in the great lobby, tall enough to be called urns and so wide-mouthed that the crack pitcher of a lady baseball team should have been able to throw a ball into one of them at five paces distant. But, although a terrible battle had raged and was still raging, the enemy had not suffered. Bright, new, imposing, capacious, untouched, they stood. But, shades of Jefferson Brick! the tile floor—the beautiful tile floor! I could not avoid thinking of the battle of Nashville, and trying to draw, as is my foolish habit, some deductions about hereditary marksmanship.

Here I first saw Major (by misplaced courtesy) Wentworth Caswell. I knew him for a type the moment my eyes suffered from the sight of him. A rat has no geographical habitat. My old friend, A. Tennyson, said, as he so well said almost everything:

Prophet, curse me the blabbing lip,
And curse me the British vermin, the rat.

Let us regard the word "British" as interchangeable *ad lib.* A rat is a rat.

This man was hunting about the hotel lobby like a starved dog that had forgotten where he had buried a bone. He had a face of great acreage, red, pulpy, and with a kind of sleepy massiveness like that of Buddha. He possessed one single virtue—he was very smoothly shaven. The mark of the beast is not indelible upon a man until he goes about with a stubble. I think that if he had not used his razor that day I would have repulsed his advances, and the criminal calendar of the world would have been spared the addition of one murder.

I happened to be standing within five feet of a cuspidor when Major Caswell opened fire upon it. I had been observant enough to perceive that the attacking force was using Gatlings instead of squirrel rifles; so I side-stepped so promptly that the Major seized the opportunity to apologize to a non-combatant. He had the blabbing lip. In four minutes he had become my friend and had dragged me to the bar.

I desire to interpolate here that I am a Southerner. But I am not one by profession or trade. I eschew the string tie, the slouch hat, the Prince Albert, the number of bales of cotton destroyed by Sherman, and plug chewing. When the orchestra plays "Dixie" I do not cheer. I slide a little lower on the leather-cornered seat and—well—order another Würzburger and wish that Longstreet had—but what's the use?

Major Caswell banged the bar with his fist, and the first gun at Fort Sumter reëchoed. When he fired the last one at Appomattox I began to hope. But then he began on family trees, and demonstrated that Adam was only a third cousin of a collateral branch of the Caswell family. Genealogy disposed of, he took up, to my distaste, his private family matters. He spoke of his wife, traced her descent back to Eve, and profanely denied any possible rumor that she may have had relations in the land of Nod.

By this time I began to suspect that he was trying to obscure by noise the fact that he had ordered the drinks, on the chance that I would be bewildered into paying for them. But when they were down he crashed a silver dollar loudly upon the bar. Then,

of course, another serving was obligatory. And when I had paid for that I took leave of him brusquely; for I wanted no more of him. But before I had obtained my release he had prated loudly of an income that his wife received, and showed a handful of silver money.

When I got my key at the desk the clerk said to me courteously: "If that man Caswell has annoyed you, and if you would like to make a complaint, we will have him ejected. He is a nuisance, a loafer, and without any known means of support, although he seems to have some money most of the time. But we don't seem to be able to hit upon any means of throwing him out legally."

"Why, no," said I, after some reflection; "I don't see my way clear to making a complaint. But I would like to place myself on record as asserting that I do not care for his company. Your town," I continued, "seems to be a quiet one. What manner of entertainment, adventure, or excitement have you to offer to the stranger within your gates?"

"Well, sir," said the clerk, "there will be a show here next Thursday. It is—I'll look it up and have the announcement sent up to your room with the ice water. Good-night."

After I went up to my room I looked out the window. It was only about ten o'clock, but I looked upon a silent town. The drizzle continued, spangled with dim lights, as far apart as currants in a cake sold at the Ladies' Exchange.

"A quiet place," I said to myself, as my first shoe struck the ceiling of the occupant of the room beneath mine. "Nothing of the life here that gives color and variety to the cities in the East and West. Just a good, ordinary, humdrum, business town."

Nashville occupies a foremost place among the manufacturing centers of the country. It is the fifth boot and shoe market in the United States, the largest candy and cracker manufacturing city in the South, and does an enormous wholesale dry-goods, grocery, and drug business.

I must tell you how I came to be in Nashville, and I assure you the digression brings as much tedium to me as it does to you. I was traveling elsewhere on my own business, but I had a commission from a Northern literary magazine to stop over there and establish a personal connection between the publication and one of its contributors, Azalea Adair.

Adair (there was no clue to the personality except the handwriting) had sent in some essays (lost art!) and poems that had made the editors swear approvingly over their one-o'clock luncheon. So they had commissioned me to round up said Adair and corner by contract his or her output at two cents a word before some other publisher offered her ten or twenty.

At nine o'clock the next morning, after my chicken livers *en brochette* (try them if you can find that hotel), I strayed out into the drizzle, which was still on for an unlimited run. At the first corner I came upon Uncle Cæsar. He was a stalwart negro, older than the pyramids, with gray wool and a face that reminded me of Brutus, and a second afterwards of the late King Cetewayo. He wore the most remarkable coat that I ever had seen or expect to see. It reached to his ankles and had once been a Confederate gray in color. But rain and sun and age had so variegated it that Joseph's coat, beside it, would have faded to a pale monochrome. I must linger with that coat, for it has to do with the story—the story that is so long in coming, because you can hardly expect anything to happen in Nashville.

Once it must have been the military coat of an officer. The cape of it had vanished, but all adown its front it had been frogged and tasseled magnificently. But now the frogs and tassels were gone. In their stead had been patiently stitched (I surmised by some surviving "black mammy") new frogs made of cunningly twisted common hempen twine. The twine was frayed and disheveled. It must have been added to the coat as a substitute for vanished splendors, with tasteless but painstaking devotion, for it followed faithfully the curves of the long-missing frogs. And, to complete the comedy and pathos of the garment, all its buttons were gone save one. The second button from the top alone remained. The coat was fastened by other twine strings tied through the buttonholes and other holes rudely pierced in the opposite side. There was never such a weird garment so fantastically bedecked and of so many mottled hues. The lone button was the size of a half-dollar, made of yellow horn and sewed on with coarse twine.

This negro stood by a carriage so old that Ham himself might have started a hack-line with it after he left the ark with the two animals hitched to it. As I approached he threw open the door, drew out a feather duster, waved it without using it, and said in deep, rumbling tones:

"Step right in, suh; ain't a speck of dust in it—jus' got back from a funeral suh."

I inferred that on such gala occasions carriages were given an extra cleaning. I looked up and down the street and perceived that there was little choice among the vehicles for hire that lined the curb. I looked in my memorandum book for the address of Azalea Adair.

"I want to go to 861 Jessamine Street," I said, and was about to step into the hack.

But for an instant the thick, long, gorilla-like arm of the old negro barred me. On his massive and saturnine face a look of sudden suspicion and enmity flashed for a moment. Then, with quickly returning conviction, he asked blandishingly: "What are you gwine there for, boss?"

"What is that to you?" I asked, a little sharply.

"Nothin', suh, jus' nothin'. Only it's a lonesome kind of part of town and few folks ever has business out there. Step right in. The seats is clean—jes' got back from a funeral, suh."

A mile and a half it must have been to our journey's end. I could hear nothing but the fearful rattle of the ancient hack over the uneven brick paving; I could smell nothing but the drizzle, now further flavored with coal smoke and something like a mixture of tar and oleander blossoms. All I could see through the streaming windows were two rows of dim houses.

The city has an area of 10 square miles; 181 miles of streets, of which 137 miles are paved; a system of waterworks that cost $2,000,000, with 77 miles of mains.

Eight-sixty-one Jessamine Street was a decayed mansion. Thirty yards back from the street it stood, outmerged in a splendid grove of trees and untrimmed shrubbery. A row of box bushes overflowed and almost hid the paling fence from sight; the gate was kept closed by a rope noose that encircled the gatepost and the first paling of the gate. But when you got inside you saw that eight-sixty-one was a shell, a shadow, a ghost of former grandeur and excellence. But in the story, I have not yet got inside.

When the hack had ceased from rattling and the weary quadrupeds came to a rest, I handed my Jehu his fifty cents with an additional quarter, feeling a glow of conscious generosity as I did so. He refused it.

"It's two dollars, suh," he said.

"How's that?" I asked. "I plainly heard you call out at the hotel: 'Fifty cents to any part of the town.'"

"It's two dollars, suh," he repeated obstinately. "It's a long ways from the hotel."

"It is within the city limits and well within them," I argued. "Don't think that you have picked up a greenhorn Yankee. Do you see those hills over there?" I went on, pointing toward the east (I could not see them, myself, for the drizzle); "well, I was born and raised on their other side. You old fool nigger, can't you tell people from other people when you see 'em?"

The grim face of King Cetewayo softened. "Is you from the South, suh? I reckon it was them shoes of yourn fooled me. They is somethin' sharp in the toes for a Southern gen'l'man to wear."

"Then the charge is fifty cents, I suppose?" said I inexorably.

His former expression, a mingling of cupidity and hostility, returned, remained ten seconds, and vanished.

"Boss," he said, "fifty cents is right; but I *needs* two dollars, suh; I'm *obleeged* to have two dollars. I ain't *demandin'* it now, suh, after I knows whar you's from; I'm jus' sayin' that I *has* to have two dollars to-night, and business is mighty po'."

Peace and confidence settled upon his heavy features. He had been luckier than he had hoped. Instead of having picked up a greenhorn, ignorant of rates, he had come upon an inheritance.

"You confounded old rascal," I said, reaching down to my pocket, "you ought to be turned over to the police."

For the first time I saw him smile. He knew; *he knew;* HE KNEW.

I gave him two one-dollar bills. As I handed them over I noticed that one of them had seen parlous times. Its upper right-hand corner was missing, and it had been torn through in the middle, but joined again. A strip of blue tissue paper, pasted over the split, preserved its negotiability.

Enough of the African bandit for the present: I left him happy, lifted the rope, and opened the creaky gate.

The house, as I said, was a shell. A paint-brush had not touched it in twenty years. I could not see why a strong wind should not have bowled it over like a house of cards until I looked again at the trees that hugged it close—the trees that saw the

battle of Nashville and still drew their protecting branches around it against storm and enemy and cold.

Azalea Adair, fifty years old, white-haired, a descendant of the cavaliers, as thin and frail as the house she lived in, robed in the cheapest and cleanest dress I ever saw, with an air as simple as a queen's, received me.

The reception-room seemed a mile square, because there was nothing in it except some rows of books, on unpainted white-pine bookshelves, a cracked marble-top table, a rag rug, a hairless horsehair sofa, and two or three chairs. Yes, there was a picture on the wall, a colored crayon drawing of a cluster of pansies. I looked around for the portrait of Andrew Jackson and the pine-cone hanging basket, but they were not there.

Azalea Adair and I had conversation, a little of which will be repeated to you. She was a product of the old South, gently nurtured in the sheltered life. Her learning was not broad, but was deep and of splendid originality in its somewhat narrow scope. She had been educated at home, and her knowledge of the world was derived from inference and by inspiration. Of such is the precious, small group of essayists made. While she talked to me I kept brushing my fingers, trying, unconsciously, to rid them guiltily of the absent dust from the half-calf backs of Lamb, Chaucer, Hazlitt, Marcus Aurelius, Montaigne, and Hood. She was exquisite, she was a valuable discovery. Nearly everybody nowadays knows too much—oh, so much too much—of real life.

I could perceive clearly that Azalea was very poor. A house and a dress she had, not much else, I fancied. So, divided between my duty to the magazine and my loyalty to the poets and essayists who fought Thomas in the valley of the Cumberland, I listened to her voice, which was like a harpischord's, and found that I could not speak of contracts. In the presence of the nine Muses and the three Graces one hesitated to lower the topic to two cents. There would have to be another colloquy after I had regained my commercialism. But I spoke of my mission, and three o'clock of the next afternoon was set for the discussion of the business proposition.

"Your town," I said, as I began to make ready to depart (which is the time for smooth generalities), "seems to be a quiet, sedate place. A home town, I should say, where few things out of the ordinary ever happen."

It carries on an extensive trade in stoves and hollow ware with the West and South, and its flouring mills have a daily capacity of more than two thousand barrels.

Azalea Adair seemed to reflect.

"I have never thought of it that way," she said, with a kind of sincere intensity that seemed to belong to her. "Isn't it in the still, quiet places that things do happen? I fancy that when God began to create the earth on the first Monday morning one could have leaned out one's window and heard the drops of mud splashing from His trowel as He built up the everlasting hills. What did the noisiest project in the world—I mean the building of the tower of Babel—result in finally? A page and a half of Esperanto in the *North American Review*."

"Of course," said I platitudinously, "human nature is the same everywhere; but there is more color—er—more drama and movement and—er—romance in some cities than in others."

"On the surface," said Azalea Adair. "I have traveled many times around the world in a golden airship wafted on two wings—print and dreams. I have seen (on one of my imaginary tours) the Sultan of Turkey bowstring with his own hands one of his wives who had uncovered her face in public. I have seen a man in Nashville tear up his theater tickets because his wife was going out with her face covered—with rice powder. In San Francisco's Chinatown I saw the slave girl Sing Yee dipped slowly, inch by inch, in boiling almond oil to make her swear she would never see her American lover again. She gave in when the boiling oil had reached three inches above her knee. At a euchre party in East Nashville the other night I saw Kitty Morgan cut dead by seven of her schoolmates and lifelong friends because she had married a house painter. The boiling oil was sizzling as high as her heart; but I wish you could have seen the fine little smile that she carried from table to table. Oh, yes, it is a humdrum town. Just a few miles of red brick houses and mud and stores and lumber yards."

Some one knocked hollowly at the back of the house. Azalea Adair breathed a soft apology and went to investigate the sound. She came back in three minutes with brightened eyes, a faint flush on her cheeks, and ten years lifted from her shoulders.

"You must have a cup of tea before you go," she said, "and a sugar cake."

She reached and shook a little iron bell. In shuffled a small negro girl about twelve, barefoot, not very tidy, glowering at me with thumb in mouth and bulging eyes.

Azalea Adair opened a tiny, worn purse and drew out a dollar bill, a dollar bill with the upper right-hand corner missing, torn in two pieces and pasted together again with a strip of blue tissue paper. It was one of the bills I had given the piratical negro—there was no doubt of it.

"Go up to Mr. Baker's store on the corner, Impy," she said, handing the girl the dollar bill, "and get a quarter of a pound of tea—the kind he always sends me—and ten cents' worth of sugar cakes. Now, hurry. The supply of tea in the house happens to be exhausted," she explained to me.

Impy left by the back way. Before the scrape of her hard, bare feet had died away on the back porch, a wild shriek—I was sure it was hers—filled the hollow house. Then the deep, gruff tones of an angry man's voice mingled with the girl's further squeals and unintelligible words.

Azalea Adair rose without surprise or emotion and disappeared. For two minutes I heard the hoarse rumble of the man's voice; then something like an oath and a slight scuffle, and she returned calmly to her chair.

"This is a roomy house," she said, "and I have a tenant for part of it. I am sorry to have to rescind my invitation to tea. It was impossible to get the kind I always use at the store. Perhaps to-morrow Mr. Baker will be able to supply me."

I was sure that Impy had not had time to leave the house. I inquired concerning street-car lines and took my leave. After I was well on my way I remembered that I had not learned Azalea Adair's name. But to-morrow would do.

That same day I started in on the course of iniquity that this uneventful city forced upon me. I was in the town only two days, but in that time I managed to lie shamelessly by telegraph, and to be an accomplice—after the fact, if that is the correct legal term—to a murder.

As I rounded the corner nearest my hotel the Afrite coachman of the polychromatic, nonpareil coat seized me, swung open the dungeony door of his peripatetic sarcophagus, flirted his feather duster, and began his ritual: "Step right in, boss. Carriage is clean—jus' got back from a funeral. Fifty cents to any—"

And then he knew me and grinned broadly. " 'Scuse me, boss;

you is de gen'l'man what rid out with me dis mawnin'. Thank you kindly, suh."

"I am going out to eight-sixty-one again to-morrow afternoon at three," said I, "and if you will be here, I'll let you drive me. So you know Miss Adair?" I concluded, thinking of my dollar bill.

"I belonged to her father, Judge Adair, suh," he replied.

"I judge that she is pretty poor," I said. "She hasn't much money to speak of, has she?"

For an instant I looked again at the fierce countenance of King Cetewayo, and then he changed back to an extortionate old negro hack-driver.

"She ain't gwine to starve, suh," he said slowly. "She has reso'ces, suh; she has reso'ces."

"I shall pay you fifty cents for the trip," said I.

"Dat is puffeckly correct, suh," he answered humbly. "I jus' *had* to have dat two dollars dis mawnin', boss."

I went to the hotel and lied by electricity. I wired the magazine: "A. Adair holds out for eight cents a word."

The answer that came back was: "Give it to her quick, you duffer."

Just before dinner "Major" Wentworth Caswell bore down upon me with the greetings of a long-lost friend. I have seen few men whom I have so instantaneously hated, and of whom it was so difficult to be rid. I was standing at the bar when he invaded me; therefore I could not wave the white ribbon in his face. I would have paid gladly for the drinks, hoping, thereby, to escape another; but he was one of those despicable, roaring, advertising bibbers who must have brass bands and fireworks attend upon every cent that they waste in their follies.

With an air of producing millions he drew two one-dollar bills from a pocket and dashed one of them upon the bar. I looked once more at the dollar bill with the upper right-hand corner missing, torn through the middle, and patched with a strip of blue tissue paper. It was my dollar bill again. It could have been no other.

I went up to my room. The drizzle and the monotony of a dreary, eventless Southern town had made me tired and listless. I remember that just before I went to bed I mentally disposed of the mysterious dollar bill (which might have formed the clue to a tremendously fine detective story of San Francisco) by say-

ing to myself sleepily: "Seems as if a lot of people here own stock in the Hack-Drivers' Trust. Pays dividends promptly, too. Wonder if—" Then I fell asleep.

King Cetewayo was at his post the next day, and rattled my bones over the stones out to eight-sixty-one. He was to wait and rattle me back again when I was ready.

Azalea Adair looked paler and cleaner and frailer than she had looked on the day before. After she had signed the contract at eight cents per word, she grew still paler and began to slip out of her chair. Without much trouble I managed to get her up on the antediluvian horsehair sofa and then I ran out to the sidewalk and yelled to the coffee-colored pirate to bring a doctor. With a wisdom that I had not suspected in him, he abandoned his team and struck off up the street afoot, realizing the value of speed. In ten minutes he returned with a grave, gray-haired, and capable man of medicine. In a few words (worth much less than eight cents each) I explained to him my presence in the hollow house of mystery. He bowed with stately understanding, and turned to the old negro.

"Uncle Cæsar," he said calmly, "run up to my house and ask Miss Lucy to give you a cream pitcher full of fresh milk and half a tumbler of port wine. And hurry back. Don't drive—run. I want you to get back sometime this week."

It occurred to me that Dr. Merriman also felt a distrust as to the speeding powers of the land-pirate's steeds. After Uncle Cæsar was gone, lumberingly, but swiftly, up the street, the doctor looked me over with great politeness and as much careful calculation until he had decided that I might do.

"It is only a case of insufficient nutrition," he said. "In other words, the result of poverty, pride, and starvation. Mrs. Caswell has many devoted friends who would be glad to aid her, but she will accept nothing except from that old negro, Uncle Cæsar, who was once owned by her family."

"Mrs. Caswell!" said I, in surprise. And then I looked at the contract and saw that she had signed it "Azalea Adair Caswell."

"I thought she was Miss Adair," I said.

"Married to a drunken, worthless loafer, sir," said the doctor. "It is said that he robs her even of the small sums that her old servant contributes toward her support."

When the milk and wine had been brought, the doctor soon revived Azelea Adair. She sat up and talked of the beauty of the

autumn leaves that were then in season, and their height of color. She referred lightly to her fainting seizure as the outcome of an old palpitation of the heart. Impy fanned her as she lay on the sofa. The doctor was due elsewhere, and I followed him to the door. I told him that it was within my power and intentions to make a reasonable advance of money to Azalea Adair on future contributions to the magazine, and he seemed pleased.

"By the way," he said, "perhaps you would like to know that you have had royalty for a coachman. Old Cæsar's grandfather was a king in Congo. Cæsar himself has royal ways, as you may have observed."

As the doctor was moving off I heard Uncle Cæsar's voice inside: "Did he git bofe of dem two dollars from you, Mis' Zalea?"

"Yes, Cæsar," I heard Azalea Adair answer weakly.

And then I went in and concluded business negotiations with our contributor. I assumed the responsibility of advancing fifty dollars, putting it as a necessary formality in binding our bargain. And then Uncle Cæsar drove me back to the hotel.

Here ends all of the story as far as I can testify as a witness. The rest must be only bare statements of facts.

At about six o'clock I went out for a stroll. Uncle Cæsar was at his corner. He threw open the door of his carriage, flourished his duster, and began his depressing formula: "Step right in, suh. Fifty cents to anywhere in the city—hack's puffickly clean, suh—jus' got back from a funeral—"

And then he recognized me. I think his eyesight was getting bad. His coat had taken on a few more faded shades of color, the twine strings were more frayed and ragged, the last remaining button—the button of yellow horn—was gone. A motley descendant of kings was Uncle Cæsar!

About two hours later I saw an excited crowd besieging the front of a drug-store. In a desert where nothing happens this was manna; so I edged my way inside. On an extemporized couch of empty boxes and chairs was stretched the mortal corporeality of Major Wentworth Caswell. A doctor was testing him for the immortal ingredient. His decision was that it was conspicuous by its absence.

The erstwhile Major had been found dead on a dark street and brought by curious and ennuied citizens to the drug-store. The late human being had been engaged in terrific battle—the details showed that. Loafer and reprobate though he had been, he had

been also a warrior. But he had lost. His hands were yet clinched so tightly that his fingers would not be opened. The gentle citizens who had known him stood about and searched their vocabularies to find some good words, if it were possible, to speak of him. One kind-looking man said, after much thought: "When 'Cas' was about fo'teen he was one of the best spellers in school."

While I stood there the fingers of the right hand of "the man that was," which hung down the side of a white-pine box, relaxed, and dropped something at my feet. I covered it with one foot quietly, and a little later on I picked it up and pocketed it. I reasoned that in his last struggle his hand must have seized that object unwittingly and held it in a death grip.

At the hotel that night the main topic of conversation, with the possible exceptions of politics and prohibition, was the demise of Major Caswell. I heard one man say to a group of listeners:

"In my opinion, gentlemen, Caswell was murdered by some of these no-account niggers for his money. He had fifty dollars this afternoon which he showed to several gentlemen in the hotel. When he was found the money was not on his person."

I left the city the next morning at nine, and as the train was crossing the bridge over the Cumberland River I took out of my pocket a yellow horn overcoat button the size of a fifty-cent piece, with frayed ends of coarse twine hanging from it, and cast it out of the window into the slow, muddy waters below.

I wonder what's doing in Buffalo!

THE REAL THING[1]

By HENRY JAMES

I

WHEN the porter's wife (she used to answer the house-bell), announced "A gentleman—with a lady, sir," I had, as I often had in those days, for the wish was father to the thought, an immediate vision of sitters. Sitters my visitors in this case proved to be; but not in the sense I should have preferred. However, there was nothing at first to indicate that they might not have come for a portrait. The gentleman, a man of fifty, very high and very straight, with a moustache slightly grizzled and a dark grey walking-coat admirably fitted, both of which I noted professionally—I don't mean as a barber or yet as a tailor—would have struck me as a celebrity if celebrities often were striking. It was a truth of which I had for some time been conscious that a figure with a good deal of frontage was, as one might say, almost never a public institution. A glance at the lady helped to remind me of this paradoxical law: she also looked too distinguished to be a "personality." Moreover one would scarcely come across two variations together.

Neither of the pair spoke immediately—they only prolonged the preliminary gaze which suggested that each wished to give the other a chance. They were visibly shy; they stood there letting me take them in—which, as I afterwards perceived, was the most practical thing they could have done. In this way their embarrassment served their cause. I had seen people painfully reluctant to mention that they desired anything so gross as to be represented on canvas; but the scruples of my new friends appeared almost insurmountable. Yet the gentleman might have said "I should like a portrait of my wife," and the lady might have said "I should like a portrait of my husband." Perhaps they were not husband and wife—this naturally would make the matter more delicate. Perhaps they wished to be done together—in

[1] From *The Real Thing,* by Henry James; copyright, 1893, by The Macmillan Company. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

which case they ought to have brought a third person to break the news.

"We come from Mr. Rivet," the lady said at last, with a dim smile which had the effect of a moist sponge passed over a "sunk" piece of painting, as well as of a vague allusion to vanished beauty. She was as tall and straight, in her degree, as her companion, and with ten years less to carry. She looked as sad as a woman could look whose face was not charged with expression; that is her tinted oval mask showed friction as an exposed surface shows it. The hand of time had played over her freely, but only to simplify. She was slim and stiff, and so well-dressed, in dark blue cloth, with lappets and pockets and buttons, that it was clear she employed the same tailor as her husband. The couple had an indefinable air of prosperous thrift—they evidently got a good deal of luxury for their money. If I was to be one of their luxuries it would behove me to consider my terms.

"Ah, Claude Rivet recommended me?" I inquired; and I added that it was very kind of him, though I could reflect that, as he only painted landscapes, this was not a sacrifice.

The lady looked very hard at the gentleman, and the gentleman looked round the room. Then staring at the floor a moment and stroking his moustache, he rested his pleasant eyes on me with the remark: "He said you were the right one."

"I try to be, when people want to sit."

"Yes, we should like to," said the lady anxiously.

"Do you mean together?"

My visitors exchanged a glance. "If you could do anything with *me,* I suppose it would be double," the gentleman stammered.

"Oh yes, there's naturally a higher charge for two figures than for one."

"We should like to make it pay," the husband confessed.

"That's very good of you," I returned, appreciating so unwonted a sympathy—for I supposed he meant pay the artist.

A sense of strangeness seemed to dawn on the lady. "We mean for the illustrations—Mr. Rivet said you might put one in."

"Put one in—an illustration?" I was equally confused.

"Sketch her off, you know," said the gentleman, colouring.

It was only then that I understood the service Claude Rivet had rendered me; he had told them that I worked in black and white, for magazines, for story-books, for sketches of contem-

porary life, and consequently had frequent employment for models. These things were true, but it was not less true (I may confess it now—whether because the aspiration was to lead to everything or to nothing I leave the reader to guess), that I couldn't get the honours, to say nothing of the emoluments, of a great painter of portraits out of my head. My "illustrations" were my pot-boilers; I looked to a different branch of art (far and away the most interesting it had always seemed to me), to perpetuate my fame. There was no shame in looking to it also to make my fortune; but that fortune was by so much further from being made from the moment my visitors wished to be "done" for nothing. I was disappointed; for in the pictorial sense I had immediately *seen* them. I had seized their type—I had already settled what I would do with it. Something that wouldn't absolutely have pleased them, I afterwards reflected.

"Ah, you're—you're—a—?" I began, as soon as I had mastered my surprise. I couldn't bring out the dingy word "models"; it seemed to fit the case so little.

"We haven't had much practice," said the lady.

"We've got to *do* something, and we've thought that an artist in your line might perhaps make something of us," her husband threw off. He further mentioned that they didn't know many artists and that they had gone first, on the off-chance (he painted views of course, but sometimes put in figures—perhaps I remembered), to Mr. Rivet, whom they had met a few years before at a place in Norfolk where he was sketching.

"We used to sketch a little ourselves," the lady hinted.

"It's very awkward, but we absolutely *must* do something," her husband went on.

"Of course, we're not so *very* young," she admitted, with a wan smile.

With the remark that I might as well know something more about them, the husband had handed me a card extracted from a neat new pocket-book (their appurtenances were all of the freshest) and inscribed with the words "Major Monarch." Impressive as these words were they didn't carry my knowledge much further; but my visitor presently added: "I've left the army, and we've had the misfortune to lose our money. In fact our means are dreadfully small."

"It's an awful bore," said Mrs. Monarch.

They evidently wished to be discreet—to take care not to

swagger because they were gentlefolks. I perceived they would have been willing to recognize this as something of a drawback, at the same time that I guessed at an underlying sense—their consolation in adversity—that they *had* their points. They certainly had; but these advantages struck me as preponderantly social; such for instance as would help to make a drawing-room look well. However, a drawing-room was always, or ought to be, a picture.

In consequence of his wife's allusion to their age Major Monarch observed: "Naturally, it's more for the figure that we thought of going in. We can still hold ourselves up." On the instant I saw that the figure was indeed their strong point. His "naturally" didn't sound vain, but it lighted up the question. "*She* has got the best," he continued, nodding at his wife, with a pleasant after-dinner absence of circumlocution. I could only reply, as if we were in fact sitting over our wine, that this didn't prevent his own from being very good; which led him in turn to rejoin: "We thought that if you ever have to do people like us, we might be something like it. *She,* particularly—for a lady in a book, you know."

I was so amused by them that, to get more of it, I did my best to take their point of view; and though it was an embarrassment to find myself appraising physically, as if they were animals on hire or useful blacks, a pair whom I should have expected to meet only in one of the relations in which criticism is tacit, I looked at Mrs. Monarch judicially enough to be able to exclaim, after a moment, with conviction: "Oh yes, a lady in a book!" She was singularly like a bad illustration.

"We'll stand up, if you like," said the Major; and he raised himself before me with a really grand air.

I could take his measure at a glance—he was six feet two and a perfect gentleman. It would have paid any club in process of formation and in want of a stamp to engage him at a salary to stand in the principal window. What struck me immediately was that in coming to me they had rather missed their vocation; they could surely have been turned to better account for advertising purposes. I couldn't of course see the thing in detail, but I could see them make someone's fortune—I don't mean their own. There was something in them for a waistcoat-maker, an hotel-keeper or a soap-vendor. I could imagine "We always use it" pinned on their bosoms with the greatest effect; I had a vision of the promptitude with which they would launch a table d'hôte.

Mrs. Monarch sat still, not from pride but from shyness, and presently her husband said to her: "Get up my dear and show how smart you are." She obeyed, but she had no need to get up to show it. She walked to the end of the studio, and then she came back blushing, with her fluttered eyes on her husband. I was reminded of an incident I had accidentally had a glimpse of in Paris—being with a friend there, a dramatist about to produce a play—when an actress came to him to ask to be intrusted with a part. She went through her paces before him, walked up and down as Mrs. Monarch was doing. Mrs. Monarch did it quite as well, but I abstained from applauding. It was very odd to see such people apply for such poor pay. She looked as if she had ten thousand a year. Her husband had used the word that described her: she was, in the London current jargon, essentially and typically "smart." Her figure was, in the same order of ideas, conspicuously and irreproachably "good." For a woman of her age her waist was surprisingly small; her elbow moreover had the orthodox crook. She held her head at the conventional angle; but why did she come to *me?* She ought to have tried on jackets at a big shop. I feared my visitors were not only destitute, but "artistic"—which would be a great complication. When she sat down again I thanked her, observing that what a draughtsman most valued in his model was the faculty of keeping quiet.

"Oh, *she* can keep quiet," said Major Monarch. Then he added, jocosely: "I've always kept her quiet."

"I'm not a nasty fidget, am I?" Mrs. Monarch appealed to her husband.

He addressed his answer to me. "Perhaps it isn't out of place to mention—because we ought to be quite business-like, oughtn't we?—that when I married her she was known as the Beautiful Statue."

"Oh dear!" said Mrs. Monarch, ruefully.

"Of course I should want a certain amount of expression," I rejoined.

"Of *course!*" they both exclaimed.

"And then I suppose you know that you'll get awfully tired."

"Oh, we *never* get tired!" they eagerly cried.

"Have you had any kind of practice?"

They hesitated—they looked at each other. "We've been photographed, *immensely,*" said Mrs. Monarch.

"She means the fellows have asked us," added the Major.

"I see—because you're so good-looking."

"I don't know what they thought, but they were always after us."

"We always got our photographs for nothing," smiled Mrs. Monarch.

"We might have brought some, my dear," her husband remarked.

"I'm not sure we have any left. We've given quantities away," she explained to me.

"With our autographs and that sort of thing," said the Major.

"Are they to be got in the shops?" I inquired, as a harmless pleasantry.

"Oh, yes; *hers*—they used to be."

"Not now," said Mrs. Monarch, with her eyes on the floor.

II

I COULD fancy the "sort of thing" they put on the presentation copies of their photographs, and I was sure they wrote a beautiful hand. It was odd how quickly I was sure of everything that concerned them. If they were now so poor as to have to earn shillings and pence, they never had had much of a margin. Their good looks had been their capital, and they had good-humouredly made the most of the career that this resource marked out for them. It was in their faces, the blankness, the deep intellectual repose of the twenty years of country-house visiting which had given them pleasant intonations. I could see the sunny drawing-rooms, sprinkled with periodicals she didn't read, in which Mrs. Monarch had continuously sat; I could see the wet shrubberies in which she had walked, equipped to admiration for either exercise. I could see the rich covers the Major had helped to shoot and the wonderful garments in which, late at night, he repaired to the smoking-room to talk about them. I could imagine their leggings and waterproofs, their knowing tweeds and rugs, their rolls of sticks and cases of tackle and neat umbrellas; and I could evoke the exact appearance of their servants and the compact variety of their luggage on the platforms of country stations.

They gave small tips, but they were liked; they didn't do anything themselves, but they were welcome. They looked so well everywhere; they gratified the general relish for stature, complexion and "form." They knew it without fatuity or vulgarity, and they respected themselves in consequence. They

were not superficial; they were thorough and kept themselves up —it had been their line. People with such a taste for activity had to have some line. I could feel how, even in a dull house, they could have been counted upon for cheerfulness. At present something had happened—it didn't matter what, their little income had grown less, it had grown least—and they had to do something for pocket-money. Their friends liked them, but didn't like to support them. There was something about them that represented credit—their clothes, their manners, their type; but if credit is a large empty pocket in which an occasional chink reverberates, the chink at least must be audible. What they wanted of me was to help to make it so. Fortunately they had no children—I soon divined that. They would also perhaps wish our relations to be kept secret: this was why it was "for the figure"—the reproduction of the face would betray them.

I liked them—they were so simple; and I had no objection to them if they would suit. But, somehow, with all their perfections I didn't easily believe in them. After all they were amateurs, and the ruling passion of my life was the detestation of the amateur. Combined with this was another perversity—an innate preference for the represented subject over the real one: the defect of the real one was so apt to be a lack of representation. I liked things that appeared; then one was sure. Whether they *were* or not was a subordinate and almost always a profitless question. There were other considerations, the first of which was that I already had two or three people in use, notably a young person with big feet, in alpaca, from Kilburn, who for a couple of years had come to me regularly for my illustrations and with whom I was still—perhaps ignobly—satisfied. I frankly explained to my visitors how the case stood; but they had taken more precautions than I supposed. They had reasoned out their opportunity, for Claude Rivet had told them of the projected *édition de luxe* of one of the writers of our day—the rarest of the novelists—who, long neglected by the multitudinous vulgar and dearly prized by the attentive (need I mention Philip Vincent?) had had the happy fortune of seeing, late in life, the dawn and then the full light of a higher criticism—an estimate in which, on the part of the public, there was something really of expiation. The edition in question, planned by a publisher of taste, was practically an act of high reparation; the wood-cuts with which it was to be enriched were the homage of English art to one of the most inde-

pendent representatives of English letters. Major and Mrs. Monarch confessed to me that they had hoped I might be able to work *them* into my share of the enterprise. They knew I was to do the first of the books, "Rutland Ramsay," but I had to make clear to them that my participation in the rest of the affair—this first book was to be a test—was to depend on the satisfaction I should give. If this should be limited my employers would drop me without a scruple. It was therefore a crisis for me, and naturally I was making special preparations, looking about for new people, if they should be necessary, and securing the best types. I admitted, however, that I should like to settle down to two or three good models who would do for everything.

"Should we have often to—a—put on special clothes?" Mrs. Monarch timidly demanded.

"Dear, yes—that's half the business."

"And should we be expected to supply our own costumes?"

"Oh, no; I've got a lot of things. A painter's models put on—or put off—anything he likes."

"And do you mean—a—the same?"

"The same?"

Mrs. Monarch looked at her husband again.

"Oh, she was just wondering," he explained, "if the costumes are in *general* use." I had to confess that they were, and I mentioned further that some of them (I had a lot of genuine, greasy last-century things), had served their time, a hundred years ago, on living, world-stained men and women. "We'll put on anything that *fits*," said the Major.

"Oh, I arrange that—they fit in the pictures."

"I'm afraid I should do better for the modern books. I would come as you like," said Mrs. Monarch.

"She has got a lot of clothes at home: they might do for contemporary life," her husband continued.

"Oh, I can fancy scenes in which you'd be quite natural." And indeed I could see the slipshod rearrangements of stale properties—the stories I tried to produce pictures for without the exasperation of reading them—whose sandy tracts the good lady might help to people. But I had to return to the fact that for this sort of work—the daily mechanical grind—I was already equipped; the people I was working with were fully adequate.

"We only thought we might be more like *some* characters," said Mrs. Monarch mildly, getting up.

Her husband also arose; he stood looking at me with a dim wistfulness that was touching in so fine a man. "Wouldn't it be rather a pull sometimes to have—a—to have—?" He hung fire; he wanted me to help him by phrasing what he meant. But I couldn't—I didn't know. So he brought it out, awkwardly: "The *real* thing; a gentleman, you know, or a lady." I was quite ready to give a general assent—I admitted that there was a great deal in that. This encouraged Major Monarch to say, following up his appeal with an unacted gulp: "It's awfully hard—we've tried everything." The gulp was communicative; it proved too much for his wife. Before I knew it Mrs. Monarch had dropped again upon a divan and burst into tears. Her husband sat down beside her, holding one of her hands; whereupon she quickly dried her eyes with the other, while I felt embarrassed as she looked up at me. "There isn't a confounded job I haven't applied for—waited for—prayed for. You can fancy we'd be pretty bad first. Secretaryships and that sort of thing? You might as well ask for a peerage. I'd be *anything*—I'm strong; a messenger or a coal-heaver. I'd put on a gold-laced cap and open carriage-doors in front of the haberdasher's; I'd hang about a station, to carry portmanteaus; I'd be a postman. But they won't *look* at you; there are thousands, as good as yourself, already on the ground. *Gentlemen,* poor beggars, who have drunk their wine, who have kept their hunters!"

I was as reassuring as I knew how to be, and my visitors were presently on their feet again while, for the experiment, we agreed on an hour. We were discussing it when the door opened and Miss Churm came in with a wet umbrella. Miss Churm had to take the omnibus to Maida Vale and then walk half-a-mile. She looked a trifle blowsy and slightly splashed. I scarcely ever saw her come in without thinking afresh how odd it was that, being so little in herself, she should yet be so much in others. She was a meagre little Miss Churm, but she was an ample heroine of romance. She was only a freckled cockney, but she could represent everything, from a fine lady to a shepherdess; she had the faculty, as she might have had a fine voice or long hair. She couldn't spell, and she loved beer, but she had two or three "points," and practice, and a knack, and mother-wit, and a kind of whimsical sensibility, and a love of the theatre, and seven sisters, and not an ounce of respect, especially for the *h*. The first thing my visitors saw was that her umbrella was wet, and in their spotless

perfection they visibly winced at it. The rain had come on since their arrival.

"I'm all in a soak; there *was* a mess of people in the 'bus. I wish you lived near a stytion," said Miss Churm. I requested her to get ready as quickly as possible, and she passed into the room in which she always changed her dress. But before going out she asked me what she was to get into this time.

"It's the Russian princess, don't you know?" I answered; "the one with the 'golden eyes,' in black velvet, for the long thing in the *Cheapside.*"

"Golden eyes? I *say!*" cried Miss Churm, while my companions watched her with intensity as she withdrew. She always arranged herself, when she was late, before I could turn round; and I kept my visitors a little, on purpose, so that they might get an idea, from seeing her, what would be expected of themselves. I mentioned that she was quite my notion of an excellent model—she was really very clever.

"Do you think she looks like a Russian princess?" Major Monarch asked, with lurking alarm.

"When I make her, yes."

"Oh, if you have to *make* her—!" he reasoned acutely.

"That's the most you can ask. There are so many that are not makeable."

"Well now, *here's* a lady"—and with a persuasive smile he passed his arm into his wife's—"who's already made!"

"Oh, I'm not a Russian princess," Mrs. Monarch protested, a little coldly. I could see that she had known some and didn't like them. There, immediately, was a complication of a kind that I never had to fear with Miss Churm.

This young lady came back in black velvet—the gown was rather rusty and very low on her lean shoulders—and with a Japanese fan in her red hands. I reminded her that in the scene I was doing she had to look over someone's head. "I forget whose it is; but it doesn't matter. Just look over a head."

"I'd rather look over a stove," said Miss Churm; and she took her station near the fire. She fell into position, settled herself into a tall attitude, gave a certain backward inclination to her head and a certain forward droop to her fan, and looked, at least to my prejudiced sense, distinguished and charming, foreign and dangerous. We left her looking so, while I went down-stairs with Major and Mrs. Monarch.

"I think I could come about as near it as that," said Mrs. Monarch.

"Oh, you think she's shabby, but you must allow for the alchemy of art."

However, they went off with an evident increase of comfort, founded on their demonstrable advantage in being the real thing. I could fancy them shuddering over Miss Churm. She was very droll about them when I went back, for I told her what they wanted.

"Well, if *she* can sit still I'll tyke to bookkeeping," said my model.

"She's very lady-like," I replied, as an innocent form of aggravation.

"So much the worse for *you*. That means she can't turn round."

"She'll do for the fashionable novels."

"Oh, yes, she'll *do* for them!" my model humorously declared. "Ain't they bad enough without her?" I had often sociably denounced them to Miss Churm.

III

It was for the elucidation of a mystery in one of these works that I first tried Mrs. Monarch. Her husband came with her, to be useful if necessary—it was sufficiently clear that as a general thing he would prefer to come with her. At first I wondered if this were for "propriety's" sake—if he were going to be jealous and meddling. The idea was too tiresome, and if it had been confirmed it would speedily have brought our acquaintance to a close. But I soon saw there was nothing in it and that if he accompanied Mrs. Monarch it was (in addition to the chance of being wanted) simply because he had nothing else to do. When she was away from him his occupation was gone—she never *had* been away from him. I judged, rightly, that in their awkward situation their close union was their main comfort and that this union had no weak spot. It was a real marriage, an encouragement to the hesitating, a nut for pessimists to crack. Their address was humble (I remember afterwards thinking it had been the only thing about them that was really professional), and I could fancy the lamentable lodgings in which the Major would have been left alone. He could bear them with his wife—he couldn't bear them without her.

He had too much tact to try and make himself agreeable when he couldn't be useful; so he simply sat and waited, when I was too absorbed in my work to talk. But I liked to make him talk—it made my work, when it didn't interrupt it, less sordid, less special. To listen to him was to combine the excitement of going out with the economy of staying at home. There was only one hindrance: that I seemed not to know any of the people he and his wife had known. I think he wondered extremely, during the term of our intercourse, whom the deuce I *did* know. He hadn't a stray sixpence of an idea to fumble for; so we didn't spin it very fine—we confined ourselves to questions of leather and even of liquor (saddlers and breeches-makers and how to get good claret cheap), and matters like "good trains" and the habits of small game. His lore on these last subjects was astonishing, he managed to interweave the station-master with the ornithologist. When he couldn't talk about greater things he could talk cheerfully about smaller, and since I couldn't accompany him into reminiscences of the fashionable world he could lower the conversation without a visible effort to my level.

So earnest a desire to please was touching in a man who could so easily have knocked one down. He looked after the fire and had an opinion on the draught of the stove, without my asking him, and I could see that he thought many of my arrangements not half clever enough. I remember telling him that if I were only rich I would offer him a salary to come and teach me how to live. Sometimes he gave a random sigh, of which the essence was: "Give me even such a bare old barrack as *this,* and I'd do something with it!" When I wanted to use him he came alone; which was an illustration of the superior courage of women. His wife could bear her solitary second floor, and she was in general more discreet; showing by various small reserves that she was alive to the propriety of keeping our relations markedly professional—not letting them slide into sociability. She wished it to remain clear that she and the Major were employed, not cultivated, and if she approved of me as a superior, who could be kept in his place, she never thought me quite good enough for an equal.

She sat with great intensity, giving the whole of her mind to it, and was capable of remaining for an hour almost as motionless as if she were before a photographer's lens. I could see she had been photographed often, but somehow the very habit that made her good for that purpose unfitted her for mine. At first I was ex-

tremely pleased with her lady-like air, and it was a satisfaction, on coming to follow her lines, to see how good they were and how far they could lead the pencil. But after a few times I began to find her too insurmountably stiff; do what I would with it my drawing looked like a photograph or a copy of a photograph. Her figure had no variety of expression—she herself had no sense of variety. You may say that this was my business, was only a question of placing her. I placed her in every conceivable position, but she managed to obliterate their differences. She was always a lady certainly, and into the bargain was always the same lady. She was the real thing, but always the same thing. There were moments when I was oppressed by the serenity of her confidence that she *was* the real thing. All her dealings with me and all her husband's were an implication that this was lucky for *me*. Meanwhile I found myself trying to invent types that approached her own, instead of making her own transform itself—in the clever way that was not impossible, for instance, to poor Miss Churm. Arrange as I would and take the precautions I would, she always, in my pictures, came out too tall—landing me in the dilemma of having represented a fascinating woman as seven feet high, which, out of respect perhaps to my own very much scantier inches, was far from my idea of such a personage.

The case was worse with the Major—nothing I could do would keep *him* down, so that he became useful only for the representation of brawny giants. I adored variety and range, I cherished human accidents, the illustrative note; I wanted to characterise closely, and the thing in the world I most hated was the danger of being ridden by a type. I had quarrelled with some of my friends about it—I had parted company with them for maintaining that one *had* to be, and that if the type was beautiful (witness Raphael and Leonardo), the servitude was only a gain. I was neither Leonardo nor Raphael; I might only be a presumptuous young modern searcher, but I held that everything was to be sacrificed sooner than character. When they averred that the haunting type in question could easily *be* character, I retorted, perhaps superficially: "Whose?" It couldn't be everybody's—it might end in being nobody's.

After I had drawn Mrs. Monarch a dozen times I perceived more clearly than before that the value of such a model as Miss Churm resided precisely in the fact that she had no positive stamp, combined of course with the other fact that what she did

have was a curious and inexplicable talent for imitation. Her usual appearance was like a curtain which she could draw up at request for a capital performance. This performance was simply suggestive; but it was a word to the wise—it was vivid and pretty. Sometimes, even, I thought it, though she was plain herself, too insipidly pretty; I made it a reproach to her that the figures drawn from her were monotonously (*bêtement,* as we used to say) graceful. Nothing made her more angry: it was so much her pride to feel that she could sit for characters that had nothing in common with each other. She would accuse me at such moments of taking away her "reputytion."

It suffered a certain shrinkage, this queer quantity, from the repeated visits of my new friends. Miss Churm was greatly in demand, never in want of employment, so I had no scruple in putting her off occasionally, to try them more at my ease. It was certainly amusing at first to do the real thing—it was amusing to do Major Monarch's trousers. They *were* the real thing, even if he did come out colossal. It was amusing to do his wife's back hair (it was so mathematically neat) and the particular "smart" tension of her tight stays. She lent herself especially to positions in which the face was somewhat averted or blurred; she abounded in lady-like back views and *profils perdus.* When she stood erect she took naturally one of the attitudes in which court-painters represent queens and princesses; so that I found myself wondering whether, to draw out this accomplishment, I couldn't get the editor of the *Cheapside* to publish a really royal romance, "A Tale of Buckingham Palace." Sometimes, however, the real thing and the make-believe came into contact; by which I mean that Miss Churm, keeping an appointment or coming to make one on days when I had much work in hand, encountered her invidious rivals. The encounter was not on their part, for they noticed her no more than if she had been the housemaid; not from intentional loftiness, but simply because, as yet, professionally, they didn't know how to fraternise, as I could guess that they would have liked—or at least that the Major would. They couldn't talk about the omnibus—they always walked; and they didn't know what else to try—she wasn't interested in good trains or cheap claret. Besides, they must have felt—in the air—that she was amused at them, secretly derisive of their ever knowing how. She was not a person to conceal her scepticism if she had had a chance to show it. On the other hand Mrs. Monarch didn't think her

tidy; for why else did she take pains to say to me (it was going out of the way, for Mrs. Monarch), that she didn't like dirty women?

One day when my young lady happened to be present with my other sitters (she even dropped in, when it was convenient, for a chat), I asked her to be so good as to lend a hand in getting tea—a service with which she was familiar and which was one of a class that, living as I did in a small way, with slender domestic resources, I often appealed to my models to render. They liked to lay hands on my property, to break the sitting, and sometimes the china—I made them feel Bohemian. The next time I saw Miss Churm after this incident she surprised me greatly by making a scene about it—she accused me of having wished to humiliate her. She had not resented the outrage at the time, but had seemed obliging and amused, enjoying the comedy of asking Mrs. Monarch, who sat vague and silent, whether she would have cream and sugar, and putting an exaggerated simper into the question. She had tried intonations—as if she too wished to pass for the real thing; till I was afraid my other visitors would take offence.

Oh, *they* were determined not to do this; and their touching patience was the measure of their great need. They would sit by the hour, uncomplaining, till I was ready to use them; they would come back on the chance of being wanted and would walk away cheerfully if they were not. I used to go to the door with them to see in what magnificent order they retreated. I tried to find other employment for them—I introduced them to several artists. But they didn't "take," for reasons I could appreciate, and I became conscious, rather anxiously, that after such disappointments they fell back upon me with a heavier weight. They did me the honour to think that it was I who was most *their* form. They were not picturesque enough for the painters, and in those days there were not so many serious workers in black and white. Besides, they had an eye to the great job I had mentioned to them—they had secretly set their hearts on supplying the right essence for my pictorial vindication of our fine novelist. They knew that for this undertaking I should want no costume-effects, none of the frippery of past ages—that it was a case in which everything would be contemporary and satirical and, presumably, genteel. If I could work them into it their future would be assured, for the labour would of course be long and the occupation steady.

One day Mrs. Monarch came without her husband—she ex-

plained his absence by his having had to go to the City. While she sat there in her usual anxious stiffness there came, at the door, a knock which I immediately recognised as the subdued appeal of a model out of work. It was followed by the entrance of a young man whom I easily perceived to be a foreigner and who proved in fact an Italian acquainted with no English word but my name, which he uttered in a way that made it seem to include all others. I had not then visited his country, nor was I proficient in his tongue; but as he was not so meanly constituted—what Italian is?—as to depend only on that member for expression he conveyed to me, in familiar but graceful mimicry, that he was in search of exactly the employment in which the lady before me was engaged. I was not struck with him at first, and while I continued to draw I emitted rough sounds of discouragement and dismissal. He stood his ground, however, not importunately, but with a dumb, dog-like fidelity in his eyes which amounted to innocent impudence—the manner of a devoted servant (he might have been in the house for years), unjustly suspected. Suddenly I saw that this very attitude and expression made a picture, whereupon I told him to sit down and wait till I should be free. There was another picture in the way he obeyed me, and I observed as I worked that there were others still in the way he looked wonderingly, with his head thrown back, about the high studio. He might have been crossing himself in St. Peter's. Before I finished I said to myself: "The fellow's a bankrupt orange-monger, but he's a treasure."

When Mrs. Monarch withdrew he passed across the room like a flash to open the door for her, standing there with the rapt, pure gaze of the young Dante spellbound by the young Beatrice. As I never insisted, in such situations, on the blankness of the British domestic, I reflected that he had the making of a servant (and I needed one, but couldn't pay him to be only that), as well as of a model; in short I made up my mind to adopt my bright adventurer if he would agree to officiate in the double capacity. He jumped at my offer, and in the event my rashness (for I had known nothing about him), was not brought home to me. He proved a sympathetic though a desultory ministrant, and had in a wonderful degree the *sentiment de la pose*. It was uncultivated, instinctive; a part of the happy instinct which had guided him to my door and helped him to spell out my name on the card nailed to it. He had had no other introduction to me than a guess, from the shape of my high north window, seen outside, that my

place was a studio and that as a studio it would contain an artist. He had wandered to England in search of fortune, like other itinerants, and had embarked, with a partner and a small green hand-cart, on the sale of penny ices. The ices had melted away and the partner had dissolved in their train. My young man wore tight yellow trousers with reddish stripes and his name was Oronte. He was sallow but fair, and when I put him into some old clothes of my own he looked like an Englishman. He was as good as Miss Churm, who could look, when required, like an Italian.

IV

I THOUGHT Mrs. Monarch's face slightly convulsed when, on her coming back with her husband, she found Oronte installed. It was strange to have to recognise in a scrap of a lazzarone a competitor to her magnificent Major. It was she who scented danger first, for the Major was anecdotically unconscious. But Oronte gave us tea, with a hundred eager confusions (he had never seen such a queer process), and I think she thought better of me for having at last an "establishment." They saw a couple of drawings that I had made of the establishment, and Mrs. Monarch hinted that it never would have struck her that he had sat for them. "Now the drawings you make from *us*, they look exactly like us," she reminded me, smiling in triumph; and I recognised that this was indeed just their defect. When I drew the Monarchs I couldn't, somehow, get away from them—get into the character I wanted to represent; and I had not the least desire my model should be discoverable in my picture. Miss Churm never was, and Mrs. Monarch thought I hid her, very properly, because she was vulgar; whereas if she was lost it was only as the dead who go to heaven are lost—in the gain of an angel the more.

By this time I had got a certain start with "Rutland Ramsay," the first novel in the great projected series; that is, I had produced a dozen drawings, several with the help of the Major and his wife, and I had sent them in for approval. My understanding with the publishers, as I have already hinted, had been that I was to be left to do my work, in this particular case, as I liked, with the whole book committed to me; but my connection with the rest of the series was only contingent. There were moments when, frankly, it *was* a comfort to have the real thing under one's hand; for there were characters in "Rutland Ramsay" that were very much like it. There were people presumably as straight as the

Major and women of as good a fashion as Mrs. Monarch. There was a great deal of country-house life—treated, it is true, in a fine, fanciful, ironical, generalised way—and there was a considerable implication of knickerbockers and kilts. There were certain things I had to settle at the outset; such things for instance as the exact appearance of the hero, the particular bloom of the heroine. The author of course gave me a lead, but there was a margin for interpretation. I took the Monarchs into my confidence, I told them frankly what I was about, I mentioned my embarrassments and alternatives. "Oh, take *him!*" Mrs. Monarch murmured sweetly, looking at her husband; and "What could you want better than my wife?" the Major inquired, with the comfortable candour that now prevailed between us.

I was not obliged to answer these remarks—I was only obliged to place my sitters. I was not easy in mind, and I postponed, a little timidly perhaps, the solution of the question. The book was a large canvas, the other figures were numerous, and I worked off at first some of the episodes in which the hero and the heroine were not concerned. When once I had set *them* up I should have to stick to them—I couldn't make my young man seven feet high in one place and five feet nine in another. I inclined on the whole to the latter measurement, though the Major more than once reminded me that *he* looked about as young as anyone. It was indeed quite possible to arrange him, for the figure, so that it would have been difficult to detect his age. After the spontaneous Oronte had been with me a month, and after I had given him to understand several different times that his native exuberance would presently constitute an insurmountable barrier to our further intercourse, I waked to a sense of his heroic capacity. He was only five feet seven, but the remaining inches were latent. I tried him almost secretly at first, for I was really rather afraid of the judgment my other models would pass on such a choice. If they regarded Miss Churm as little better than a snare, what would they think of the representation by a person so little the real thing as an Italian street-vendor of a protagonist formed by a public school?

If I went a little in fear of them it was not because they bullied me, because they had got an oppressive foothold, but because in their really pathetic decorum and mysteriously permanent newness they counted on me so intensely. I was therefore very glad when Jack Hawley came home: he was always of such good

counsel. He painted badly himself, but there was no one like him for putting his finger on the place. He had been absent from England for a year; he had been somewhere—I don't remember where—to get a fresh eye. I was in a good deal of dread of any such organ, but we were old friends; he had been away for months and a sense of emptiness was creeping into my life. I hadn't dodged a missile for a year.

He came back with a fresh eye, but with the same old black velvet blouse, and the first evening he spent in my studio we smoked cigarettes till the small hours. He had done no work himself, he had only got the eye; so the field was clear for the production of my little things. He wanted to see what I had done for the *Cheapside,* but he was disappointed in the exhibition. That at least seemed the meaning of two or three comprehensive groans which, as he lounged on my big divan, on a folded leg, looking at my latest drawings, issued from his lips with the smoke of the cigarette.

"What's the matter with you?" I asked.

"What's the matter with *you?*"

"Nothing save that I'm mystified."

"You are indeed. You're quite off the hinge. What's the meaning of this new fad?" And he tossed me, with visible irreverence, a drawing in which I happened to have depicted both my majestic models. I asked if he didn't think it good, and he replied that it struck him as execrable, given the sort of thing I had always represented myself to him as wishing to arrive at; but I let that pass, I was so anxious to see exactly what he meant. The two figures in the picture looked colossal, but I supposed this was *not* what he meant inasmuch as, for aught he knew to the contrary, I might have been trying for that. I maintained that I was working exactly in the same way as when he last had done me the honour to commend me. "Well, there's a big hole somewhere," he answered; "wait a bit and I'll discover it." I depended upon him to do so: where else was the fresh eye? But he produced at last nothing more luminous than "I don't know—I don't like your types." This was lame, for a critic who had never consented to discuss with me anything but the question of execution, the direction of strokes and the mystery of values.

"In the drawings you've been looking at I think my types are very handsome."

"Oh, they won't do!"

"I've had a couple of new models."

"I see you have. *They* won't do."

"Are you very sure of that?"

"Absolutely—they're stupid."

"You mean *I* am—for I ought to get round that."

"You *can't*—with such people. Who are they?"

I told him, as far as was necessary, and he declared, heartlessly: *"Ce sont des gens qu'il faut mettre à la porte."*

"You've never seen them; they're awfully good," I compassionately objected.

"Not seen them? Why, all this recent work of yours drops to pieces with them. It's all I want to see of them."

"No one else has said anything against it—the *Cheapside* people are pleased."

"Everyone else is an ass, and the *Cheapside* people the biggest asses of all. Come, don't pretend, at this time of day, to have pretty illusions about the public, especially about publishers and editors. It's not for *such* animals you work—it's for those who know, *coloro che sanno;* so keep straight for *me* if you can't keep straight for yourself. There's a certain sort of thing you tried for from the first—and a very good thing it is. But this twaddle isn't *in* it." When I talked with Hawley later about "Rutland Ramsay" and its possible successors he declared that I must get back into my boat again or I would go to the bottom. His voice in short was the voice of warning.

I noted the warning, but I didn't turn my friends out of doors. They bored me a good deal; but the very fact that they bored me admonished me not to sacrifice them—if there was anything to be done with them—simply to irritation. As I look back at this phase they seem to me to have pervaded my life not a little. I have a vision of them as most of the time in my studio, seated, against the wall, on an old velvet bench to be out of the way, and looking like a pair of patient courtiers in a royal ante-chamber. I am convinced that during the coldest weeks of the winter they held their ground because it saved them fire. Their newness was losing its gloss, and it was impossible not to feel that they were objects of charity. Whenever Miss Churm arrived they went away, and after I was fairly launched in "Rutland Ramsay" Miss Churm arrived pretty often. They managed to express to me tacitly that they supposed I wanted her for the low life of the book, and I let them suppose it, since they had attempted to study

the work—it was lying about the studio—without discovering that it dealt only with the highest circles. They had dipped into the most brilliant of our novelists without deciphering many passages. I still took an hour from them, now and again, in spite of Jack Hawley's warning: it would be time enough to dismiss them, if dismissal should be necessary, when the rigour of the season was over. Hawley had made their acquaintance—he had met them at my fireside—and thought them a ridiculous pair. Learning that he was a painter they tried to approach him, to show him too that they were the real thing; but he looked at them, across the big room, as if they were miles away: they were a compendium of everything that he most objected to in the social system of his country. Such people as that, all convention and patent-leather, with ejaculations that stopped conversation, had no business in a studio. A studio was a place to learn to see, and how could you see through a pair of feather beds?

The main inconvenience I suffered at their hands was that, at first, I was shy of letting them discover how my artful little servant had begun to sit to me for "Rutland Ramsay." They knew that I had been odd enough (they were prepared by this time to allow oddity to artists,) to pick a foreign vagabond out of the streets, when I might have had a person with whiskers and credentials; but it was some time before they learned how high I rated his accomplishments. They found him in an attitude more than once, but they never doubted I was doing him as an organ-grinder. There were several things they never guessed, and one of them was that for a striking scene in the novel, in which a footman briefly figured, it occurred to me to make use of Major Monarch as the menial. I kept putting this off, I didn't like to ask him to don the livery—besides the difficulty of finding a livery to fit him. At last, one day late in the winter, when I was at work on the despised Oronte (he caught one's idea in an instant), and was in the glow of feeling that I was going very straight, they came in, the Major and his wife, with their society laugh about nothing (there was less and less to laugh at), like country-callers —they always reminded me of that—who have walked across the park after church and are presently persuaded to stay to luncheon. Luncheon was over, but they could stay to tea—I knew they wanted it. The fit was on me, however, and I couldn't let my ardour cool and my work wait, with the fading daylight, while my model prepared it. So I asked Mrs. Monarch if she would mind

laying it out—a request which, for an instant, brought all the blood to her face. Her eyes were on her husband's for a second, and some mute telegraphy passed between them. Their folly was over the next instant; his cheerful shrewdness put an end to it. So far from pitying their wounded pride, I must add, I was moved to give it as complete a lesson as I could. They bustled about together and got out the cups and saucers and made the kettle boil. I know they felt as if they were waiting on my servant, and when the tea was prepared I said: "He'll have a cup, please—he's tired." Mrs. Monarch brought him one where he stood, and he took it from her as if he had been a gentleman at a party, squeezing a crush-hat with an elbow.

Then it came over me that she had made a great effort for me—made it with a kind of nobleness—and that I owed her a compensation. Each time I saw her after this I wondered what the compensation could be. I couldn't go on doing the wrong thing to oblige them. Oh, it *was* the wrong thing, the stamp of the work for which they sat—Hawley was not the only person to say it now. I sent in a large number of the drawings I had made for "Rutland Ramsay," and I received a warning that was more to the point than Hawley's. The artistic adviser of the house for which I was working was of opinion that many of my illustrations were not what had been looked for. Most of these illustrations were the subjects in which the Monarchs had figured. Without going into the question of what *had* been looked for, I saw at this rate I shouldn't get the other books to do. I hurled myself in despair upon Miss Churm, I put her through all her paces. I not only adopted Oronte publicly as my hero, but one morning when the Major looked in to see if I didn't require him to finish a figure for the *Cheapside,* for which he had begun to sit the week before, I told him that I had changed my mind—I would do the drawing from my man. At this my visitor turned pale and stood looking at me. "Is *he* your idea of an English gentleman?" he asked.

I was disappointed, I was nervous, I wanted to get on with my work; so I replied with irritation: "Oh, my dear Major—I can't be ruined for *you!*"

He stood another moment; then, without a word, he quitted the studio. I drew a long breath when he was gone, for I said to myself that I shouldn't see him again. I had not told him definitely that I was in danger of having my work rejected, but I was vexed at his not having felt the catastrophe in the air, read with

me the moral of our fruitless collaboration, the lesson that, in the deceptive atmosphere of art, even the highest respectability may fail of being plastic.

I didn't owe my friends money, but I did see them again. They reappeared together, three days later, and under the circumstances there was something tragic in the fact. It was a proof to me that they could find nothing else in life to do. They had threshed the matter out in a dismal conference—they had digested the bad news that they were not in for the series. If they were not useful to me even for the *Cheapside* their function seemed difficult to determine, and I could only judge at first that they had come, forgivingly, decorously, to take a last leave. This made me rejoice in secret that I had little leisure for a scene; for I had placed both my other models in position together and I was pegging away at a drawing from which I hoped to derive glory. It had been suggested by the passage in which Rutland Ramsay, drawing up a chair to Artemisia's piano-stool, says extraordinary things to her while she ostensibly fingers out a difficult piece of music. I had done Miss Churm at the piano before—it was an attitude in which she knew how to take on an absolutely poetic grace. I wished the two figures to "compose" together, intensely, and my little Italian had entered perfectly into my conception. The pair were vividly before me, the piano had been pulled out; it was a charming picture of blended youth and murmured love, which I had only to catch and keep. My visitors stood and looked at it, and I was friendly to them over my shoulder.

They made no response, but I was used to silent company and went on with my work, only a little disconcerted (even though exhilarated by the sense that *this* was at least the ideal thing), at not having got rid of them after all. Presently I heard Mrs. Monarch's sweet voice beside, or rather above me: "I wish her hair was a little better done." I looked up and she was staring with a strange fixedness at Miss Churm, whose back was turned to her. "Do you mind my just touching it?" she went on—a question which made me spring up for an instant, as with the instinctive fear that she might do the young lady a harm. But she quieted me with a glance I shall never forget—I confess I should like to have been able to paint *that*—and went for a moment to my model. She spoke to her softly, laying a hand upon her shoulder and bending over her; and as the girl, understanding, gratefully assented, she disposed her rough curls, with a few quick

passes, in such a way as to make Miss Churm's head twice as charming. It was one of the most heroic personal services I have ever seen rendered. Then Mrs. Monarch turned away with a low sigh and, looking about her as if for something to do, stooped to the floor with a noble humility and picked up a dirty rag that had dropped out of my paint-box.

The Major meanwhile had also been looking for something to do and, wandering to the other end of the studio, saw before him my breakfast things, neglected, unremoved. "I say, can't I be useful *here?*" he called out to me with an irrepressible quaver. I assented with a laugh that I fear was awkward and for the next ten minutes, while I worked, I heard the light clatter of china and the tinkle of spoons and glass. Mrs. Monarch assisted her husband—they washed up my crockery, they put it away. They wandered off into my little scullery, and I afterwards found that they had cleaned my knives and that my slender stock of plate had an unprecedented surface. When it came over me, the latent eloquence of what they were doing, I confess that my drawing was blurred for a moment—the picture swam. They had accepted their failure, but they couldn't accept their fate. They had bowed their heads in bewilderment to the perverse and cruel law in virtue of which the real thing could be so much less precious than the unreal; but they didn't want to starve. If my servants were my models, my models might be my servants. They would reverse the parts—the others would sit for the ladies and gentlemen, and *they* would do the work. They would still be in the studio—it was an intense dumb appeal to me not to turn them out. "Take us on," they wanted to say—"we'll do *anything*."

When all this hung before me the *afflatus* vanished—my pencil dropped from my hand. My sitting was spoiled and I got rid of my sitters, who were also evidently rather mystified and awe-struck. Then, alone with the Major and his wife, I had a most uncomfortable moment. He put their prayer into a single sentence: "I say, you know—just let *us* do for you, can't you?" I couldn't—it was dreadful to see them emptying my slops; but I pretended I could, to oblige them, for about a week. Then I gave them a sum of money to go away; and I never saw them again. I obtained the remaining books, but my friend Hawley repeats that Major and Mrs. Monarch did me a permanent harm, got me into a second-rate trick. If it be true I am content to have paid the price—for the memory.

THE SECOND EGG[1]

By ELISE JEAN JERARD

CONRAD HOOR had made a little go a long way and no one had helped Conrad Hoor. When he was a young man, he came from Holland. He was squat, with small twinkly eyes and a twist to his mouth that mocked at fate and that ineptitude of other men who knuckled to it. Conrad Hoor felt superior. He felt unconquered even as a boy. He stood before a blackboard on Sixth Avenue in New York on his first bitter cold American day, when the snow was falling and the pavement was slippery, and neither the day nor the thousands of dark, hurrying forms cared a hoot about Conrad Hoor. The blackboards listed jobs to be had in the West. By morning he was on a train to a farm in South Dakota. He worked as a hired man for fifteen dollars a month and keep. He liked farming that stubborn land.

He found himself a wife out of an immigrant Bohemian family that lived in a drawside cave. The girl, Tessie, was the oldest of nine, fair and healthy. She would work and cost him little. She trembled when he took her in his strong arms one evening when they met in the pasture, where he allowed her to graze her one cow. His eyes shone, though he did not love her. He knew that she would always yield and cling, as she yielded and clung to him at that moment—and that when he was used to her body and her gentle ways and fed up with them, he could say: "Well, who were you before you married me? Living like an animal till I pulled you out. So whatever you are, I, Conrad Hoor, made you." And he could always get work out of her.

He took her to Kansas and mortgaged himself up to his neck to get land, although it was cheap in those days. It was in the '80's, at the end of that second great wave of migration when many settlers of Kansas, Indiana, and Illinois were still climbing aboard the covered wagons with bag and baggage, born and unborn, and turning their faces to the West.

[1] From *The Forum*, October, 1928; copyright, 1928, by *The Forum*. Reprinted by permission of the author.

He had much work out of Tessie, and two children—one a pale "dude" son for whom he had no respect and whose vitality he crushed with mockery. A boy who was all for books and a white-collar job in the city, and who was needed on the farm. And a daughter, tall and fiery and dark, the Spanish type so often cropping out in the Dutch strain. He preferred her and fought her, made her knuckle down. He knew she was in love with John Collins, the son of a grocer from Topeka. One of John's ancestors, away back, had founded the first log-cabin grocery at the end of a trail around which Topeka arose. John's father and John made out in spite of the chain-store competition, running the kind of grocery that opens at six in the morning if a forgetful wife has overlooked buying her eggs the day before; where you know they won't cheat the children—for they know them—and where the local men hang around of evenings talking politics and affairs of the day and women.

Conrad Hoor knew that John wanted to take his daughter Mayme into town next winter, but he had no intention of letting her go. She was needed for the farm, too. John had offered to come out and serve as a hand without pay this harvest, and Conrad had said: "Let him come!" His eyes twinkled. He would make John Collins work for nothing and then show him he couldn't have his daughter.

He walked out of his house this seething July morning between the gleaming cottonwoods where the leaves hung limp under the dust—submissive like Conrad Hoor's wife, tired trees. His house needed a coat of paint, but he couldn't waste money on such nonsense. The house stood without a coat of paint and you got the same work out of it. His wife needed a new dress, too, and so did his daughter. But they didn't get them. You got work just the same without.

"Well," he called to the hired man, "What's the matter? Why don't you start the truck?"

The Ford was supposed to have set out two hours before, right after sun-up, to fetch the hands from Preston. But Izzy, the hired man, had been tinkering with it, cursing away in the garage. He scowled and spat as Conrad came. Izzy turned on him sullenly.

"Why don't I start her? You make me laugh. Motor's tired out—gears rotted—brakes in such a state she has no right on the road at all. Liable to kill myself and the hands, too, and smash

into anything. But that's you. Spend five hundred dollars in the last five years to patch up this junk; then what you got's no good. For four hundred you could get another car. But that's you all right."

"Shut up!" shouted Conrad Hoor, his small eyes bright and his brown hands waving. "I've heard enough out of you. I'm boss on this farm. If I say fix this car, it's your job to fix her so she'll run. I don't ask no help in running the farm. If you don't like your job—you can git!"

"All right," muttered the hired man, flushing darkly as he climbed into the front seat. "That suits me. I'll take this car to Preston and then I'll git. I'm only doin' it 'cause I know damn well you'll have Mayme doin' it, though she's up to her ears in work in the kitchen—or Mark, when he comes back from sweatin' on a heavy nag from buyin' your bacon and groceries back to the village."

He rammed the gears and the dilapidated Ford coughed and jerked away.

Conrad turned on his heel and walked back to the house.

When he entered the kitchen, his daughter Mayme, red in the face from bending over the stove, flashed him her bold, defiant look.

"You'll be nice to John," she called over her shoulder as she laid the platters of fruits, cereals, rolls, and preserves on the long table covered with white oilcloth and laid for twenty. "None o' your tricks."

Conrad Hoor chuckled. He didn't answer her. He went over to where her mother was opening the brown, stone egg crock. He stood over her. Her hands shook as she took out about forty eggs and piled them in a bowl, handy to take out and break and fry in a hurry when she heard the rattling of the truck.

He said nothing till she was all finished selecting them. Then he put his hands on his hips and said ironically, "What you tryin' to do, Tessie? Run a health farm for hands? Send 'em home to their mothers fattened up at my expense? This has been a pretty hard year. Oil's gone up. Had to pay more on the thresher."

"Well, all the same," she said, beginning to slice a ham into strips, "you gotta feed the hands."

"Sure." He nodded. "Sure you gotta feed 'em. And what's

all that on the table? That's grub, ain't it? This is a sweatin' hot day. You don't want 'em to drop in the fields. One egg is plenty on a day like this. Ain't no use, Tessie, to answer back."

He turned, slammed the screen door behind him and stood out on his porch. He folded his arms with the blue shirt sleeves rolled up over the hard, lumpy, brown muscles. The locusts sang and the larks purled and an occasional liquid note of thrushes hidden in the grain rose up, refreshing the hot air. A breeze came walking through the grass lands with a crooning tune and bent over Conrad's grain fields, caressing the blond hair of the over-ripe wheat—waiting, whispering. The touch of the wind on the pale silk was like a lover's touch. The hard man on the back porch understood. He loved his land, if he loved anything. It was beautiful and yielded. But not without a struggle. He fought for the land and he fought it.

He looked at his barn where the hayloft was stacked and where tired men would sleep that night. The bins and granaries were all prepared. The thresher was fit and oiled. He squinted at the sky. It was mackerel—a clean, blue sky flecked all over with little, foamy, white wisps. In the East there was a tiny sepia fist of nimbus formation. But he didn't think much of it. It was true that some of the papers had spoken of possible rains to come. But the farmland papers were always nervous; always there was the scare of wet. Conrad had never been wrong in his prophecies. He was pretty sure that the harvest would hold clear. And sure of a bumper crop. Not a Hessian fly nor a chinch bug on his place. He was contented. Content with himself and conditions. So he was content with God as well. For Conrad's God was himself and conditions.

At that moment he heard the choky scrape of the truck and the men's voices floating near. The car had brought them safely. The fool, Izzy, was wrong again in his fears. Tessie, Mayme, Mark, Izzy—the whole bunch of them—they were always scared. Only he, Conrad, had a clear head; he knew what it was all about.

A few minutes later, when the men had washed up in the milk shed and were laughing and talking over their grub, or piling in silently, with shoveling arms, Conrad stood by watching with amused, twinkly eyes. He had had a little breakfast and he never

ate much in harvest time. He took stock of John Collins, with his great blue-shirted shoulders, and his daughter, Mayme, bending over him and plying him with the best. She was a shameless one, was Mayme. He liked her for it, but it wouldn't get her anywhere.

Then Tessie, with a frightened air, and Mayme, with her proud and fearless gait, brought in the platters full of eggs, bordered with high-piled bacon, shining with fat and darkling with lean. There were just twenty eggs. John Collins was the first to notice that and he called loudly with a jolly laugh: "You'll have to hand us another helpin' there, Mother. One egg ain't nothin' for a growin' boy." Then the other men roared and guffawed.

"The hell you say, Collins! Why sure enough if it ain't!"

"Looks like the Hoor's hens sure must of had paralysis!"

"Just a little joke, ain't it, Ma? Servin' 'em in courses?"

"A one-aig stand! 'At even beats the army.

"Lady, cough up that other aig!"

The tenor of their rebukes was jesting and good-natured. But Tessie stod there, white with terror. Her fingers chewed her apron. Both she and Mayme looked around for Conrad Hoor. But he wasn't in sight.

"Boys, I'd like to give you another aig," Tessie quavered. "But I can't do nothin' without my husband's orders."

Even Mayme went silent. She had no desire to flout the old man when she had that situation of John Collins on her hands. So Mayme didn't volunteer to cook more eggs.

Now some of the men began to grumble, to grow surly. There were a few hobos in the crowd with rough, bluish growth on their faces whom Conrad Hoor had jewed into working for a hand-out and a bed. They were spoiling for a fight and sensed a first-rate chance. Most of them, though, were the regular floating laborer type that bears the brunt of the country's seeding and harvests; working northwest from the early harvest of Oklahoma, on to Missouri and up Red River way till the season ends at last in Manitoba. Hard-working nomads, drifters but not drones, possessed of few ambitions and few vices.

John Collins tried to make light of Conrad's trick on account of his girl. He slapped the two broad backs on either side of him.

"Come on, buddies! Ain't gonna fuss with these ladies for a durned aig! Fight it out with the old man out to the fields!"

They found him there—an island in the heavy, hot, sweet sea of wheat, ripe but not dead ripe; in no danger of shattering. Conrad knew how to get the most from his land. His six hundred acres had been good soil when they came to him. Now they were fecund soil, well fertilized, loose, clayey, bearing him a fine thin bran that made delicate flour. He knew how to fight the frosts, how to drain it well after the snows, how to roll just enough before sowing the winter seed. And now as he stood with the little white and blue butterflies fluttering round his great grain-colored hat, Conrad Hoor was dreaming.

He was dreaming of the huge bonanza farm up Red River way, in Dakota, that he and Marty Haskins were going to own some day. The present owner, an old man, had it dirt cheap from the railroads, who had gotten it in the first place as a government grant. It was two thousand acres—two thousand golden, beckoning acres of rich wheat. No eye could see the limits of it. It was so great that men living at one end of that land might not see the men living at the other end for days; so great that horse communication would be too slow to carry messages across it. The old man who owned it didn't know values, wasn't shrewd. Conrad had screwed him down to a good bargain. He was willing to sell the whole, improvements and all—wooden buildings, sheds, work-shops, stables—for twenty-five dollars an acre. Conrad Hoor and Marty Haskins might be gods over all that some day. If things went right, they would be rich. And things went right for Conrad. He knew how to sweat gain out of life, how to dominate it.

John Collins' voice sounded in his ear. Conrad turned and flicked away a little white butterfly that danced before his small, shrewd eyes.

"Well?" said Conrad.

"Well, just this, Hoor. We ain't gonna be satisfied with half rations on aigs. No eatin', no workin'. We're tellin' you that straight. It ain't no more than our rights."

Hoor's face set. So the grocer's brat was going to get impudent with him. Twenty-three, young, tall, broad-shouldered, and impudent. The faces of the other men were backing him, grinning or surly. Going to tell him where he got off—who was master on his farm? Conrad met Collins' steady blue eyes. Challenging him, eh? It wasn't simply a question of an egg. He saw there was something else in those eyes. Mayme. Power. The

corners of Conrad's mouth twitched and his eyes flattened out as if the sun was too glaring. He answered Collins between tight lips.

"A-right," he said, "a-right. You get fed. You get your belly filled. Where's the horse teams? I don't see no carts. Where's the twine? Come on, git. Send them larks wheelin' out of my grain. Git them jack rabbits to runnin'. In four days this wheat has got to be in the thresher. What about you startin' a little harvestin' besides kickin'? I'll take care of your grub."

Then he apportioned their work; stationed two men on each reaper behind the four horses and one man to follow, binding the grain that was cut and stacked by the machine. He moved here and there, with swift eye and curt orders. The men's blue shirts turned black. Presently, above the steady rustling of the reapers, pattering rain began to fall upon the hard-breathing men, the longing earth. "Just one o' them damn little soft-water showers," shrugged Conrad Hoor. Work went right on.

That night Mayme and John Collins went off for a walk in the glistening grasses; and the "dude" son Mark also strayed off alone. Conrad Hoor's lips curled. He knew what his son was dreaming about, beating around like a fool under the stars through the night, sweet with flowers and with grain; he dreamt of the city. And he could keep right on dreaming of it, too—the white-collar softie. Conrad Hoor sat apart on his back porch, smoking an old briar pipe, relaxed, hearing the men play the harmonica and sing in close harmony. His wife sat by him, shelling some peas that dropped with little thuds in the tin pot. She drooped strangely in her white dress. Once Conrad made a movement as if to touch her hand. But he got up instead and went to bed.

The next morning when the hands sat down to breakfast, Mayme and Tessie brought in the platters that bore just one egg for each. Mayme's eyes flashed, but Tessie's hands shook so that the dish would have fallen if John hadn't seized it.

He raised it high like some offering he might have been sacrificing at some ancient feast to the gods, and angrily cursed Conrad Hoor. "Look what he's tryin' to put over. The dirty sneak, the two-penny piker." Then the men began to shout and jumped on the benches and swore and brandished their arms and some began smashing the crockery. The roughnecks in the gang, who had been spoiling for a fight, had it and their eyes blazed. They

hurled plates against the wall with a vim, like balls at a nigger's head in a county fair. It was a dripping hot day and everything that was savage in man could be ripped open like a scarcely healed wound.

Tessie cowered against the wall, holding her apron over her eyes, the immemorial woman around whom men fight and ravage. Mayme, beside the stove, stood on her toes and screamed. Perhaps something in Mayme enjoyed it all just a little.

At that moment Conrad walked in. The screen door thudded with a little plop like the air leaving a balloon. A single fly was heard buzzing against the woven bars.

Hoor laid his hat on the table and said calmly, as if inquiring if they felt the heat, "Don't you like your grub, boys?" His small eyes glittered.

The men shouted with tangled voices and John Collins took a step forward. He was a head and an inch taller than Conrad and his young eyes looked as hard as blue pebbles. His hands hung relaxed, while Conrad's left hand stirred in his pocket and the middle finger of his right moved with a cracking sound over the ball of his thumb.

"We ain't gonna work on one aig, and you may as well give in," said John. You could hear the locusts and the sleepy wheat whispering.

"Oh," said Hoor, nodding as if he were surprised. "Oh! It's an aig as was botherin' you. Well, I ain't throwin' money around. I know my job. And I'm the boss." Then suddenly he waved his hands and shouted passionately. "Git out there—you hear? I say git on them reapers. Cut that there wheat. Then to-morrow, if you done a good day's job, you kin have what you're bellyachin' for. Yesterday you slacked through your job. Hear? Git in them fields!"

Then he took his hat in his hand and slammed the door behind him. Without a backward glance, he walked down the glistening path. Little white and blue butterflies came and played around his head and the sun and air pressed down searing, aching. He heard the names shouted after him; he did not pause. He went on to his fields, his beloved. He manned a reaper and went churring down the field alone, the golden harvest falling before him, the stubble rolling out in an even ribbon behind, the stacks mounting like little golden castles in his wake. Here and there a scared jack rabbit ran, wondering at the havoc in his home

that had been so safe. So the hands would come scurrying after him—like frightened jack rabbits. He smiled. They couldn't hold out. It was too late to get other harvest jobs in the neighborhood. They would see how crazy it was to fight him for an egg.

And besides, he was right. He had promised them they could have that egg if they did their work the right way to-day. He was the fighting boss. Hands—drifters—men without land or ties, they had no fight in them. Only Collins, the grocer's boy. He had fight. Conrad's mouth set in a grim, half smile. His lips trembled a little as he licked at the salt sweat, the large bitter drops that poured like tears over his eyes. He'd sure have to beat Collins. He would have liked him for a son. But not for a son-in-law. And if John had been his son, Conrad would have had to beat him anyway. He couldn't tell why; it was just so. Meanwhile the sun fried him. No, not fried; there was a peculiar wetness in its quality. It stewed him—through his leathery skin. Conrad Hoor, sixty years old, trying to reap his six hundred acres. Fighting. Squeezing the most out of his men.

At ten o'clock and again at four when the shadows began to fall purple-blue out of the cottonwood grove, his wife rode out with his lunch. He asked nothing and she told nothing. He took the lunch and she drove back.

At about half past five, Conrad Hoor burst into his back doorway and found her washing stacks of dishes piled in the sink like bold, little white islands, islands of tough white shells.

Conrad Hoor turned red.

"What's that, what's that?" he shouted. "You didn't go feed them bums—at my expense!"

He quivered so with rage that his broad shoulders shuddered.

Tessie shook her head and dropped a knife with a clang. She went on holding the rest of the silver under the spigot, pumping away with her left hand.

"No. The men sent to Preston for their own grub, Conrad."

He wanted to know who cooked it.

At first Tessie didn't want to tell. Then she said in a frightened voice, "Mayme did."

Where were they now, he wanted to know.

They had gone off to spend the evening down to Preston.

He laughed, a crackle of a laugh like a dry leaf splitting.

They had gone off in his truck—John Collins and his girl and all the hands who hadn't done any work.

"They needn't come back here," he said. "Who wants them?"

"I told them to wait till to-morrow—you'd come round," she said, rubbing the knife that had fallen.

"Oh, you told them!" She was afraid he'd strike her. But he only turned and went upstairs.

Next morning when there was exactly one egg for every hand, there was less drama than the day before. The men just quit. Headed by John Collins they had come down all ready with their bundles prepared and slung over their backs, and when Conrad came into the kitchen his eyes twinkled as if he had won something. He said as he paid them off, "Well, boys, you'll see. Just lost a lot of time fightin'. Purty hard gettin' jobs at this season of the year. You'll learn it don't pay to be stubborn."

Mark, his son, who had turned white during these proceedings, brought out the rattling and choking truck. Then Conrad Hoor said, "So long." The men piled in. It was only when Mayme appeared at the front door with her city hat of black straw and her dark blue serge suit, handing her suitcase to John, that Hoor seemed to wake up. Suddenly he realized that something different, something terrible was happening. He looked at Mayme's mother, following, crying in her apron. Tessie would do nothing to stop Mayme from going. Of course Tessie would do nothing.

Conrad Hoor came forward, flushing, without a word. He tried to wrench the suitcase out of Collins' great fist. But the suitcase did not yield. The veins rose on Conrad's face. The blood mounted hotly and spun in his head. The men were seated there craning their necks from the truck. Conrad Hoor grew purple and almost wrenched his fingers out. He puffed and struggled with the younger man. It was only as he wrestled with John Collins for that suitcase that this whole situation began to grow a little more real. Perhaps the sun had softened his brain—perhaps he was an old man—perhaps the scales were falling from his eyes. Conrad Hoor was being beaten for the first time—in public.

Now the sort of drunken madness in which he had been driving in the sun all the day before—all the years before—began to yield to one hard, terrible fact. His daughter was leaving him—over his impotent body. Had Conrad Hoor no power any more? Was she going—going?

He turned and shouted at his daughter for the first time. "Where are you going?"

She replied vehemently: "I'm going with John to Topeka. I'm going to marry him. I'm through with the farm and I'm through with you. I'm through with you—through with you. Do you get it?"

She went and buried her head on her mother's shoulder and the women began to weep. Conrad Hoor stood tall and straight and alone under the cottonwood tree, the woman tree. He turned to Collins and said, "Ja— you think you win. But I get you yet." He said it in a very Dutch way, as if reverting to his boyhood. But he was bewildered. He laughed as his daughter tore loose from her mother and climbed in behind her white-faced brother and drove away beside her lover, John Collins, sitting with his arm about her. Conrad Hoor walked out to the road and called through the white, stinging dust the truck kicked up, "Fools. You find how hard it is to get you jobs.—For an egg!"

Then the rattling and backfiring of the truck grew fainter. He stood a moment, pressing his hand before his eyes. Then he stamped into the kitchen and took a drink of water. His wife sat still with her arms on the table, her head on her arms.

"Never mind," he said. "Never mind. I get hands to cut the grain."

He looked out of the window. In the sweltering, sweet air the wheat waved and beckoned, like a bride, waiting, quivering. He got out the small gray Ford and drove to town.

In the evening he came back, silent. He went straight to his room. His wife sat in the misty stillness. The air was like a wet cat on her chest. She rocked to and fro on the back porch as if she had a baby in her lap. She knew there were no hands to be had.

Suddenly fingers touched her arm. At first she thought they were imagined, they were so cold. But then she saw they were real. It was her son, Mark, back from town. His breath smelt faintly of liquor, but his hair was slicked neatly. He wore a gray suit and a new blue tie and a blue shirt that she had never seen. She looked down at his shoes. Her hand went to her breast. She knew. She knew without his telling her.

There was a crescent moon behind the milk shed facing her and the night was sweet with rose mallow and new-cut hay and the heaviness of rich, over-ripe wheat. It was a time for young

people to go out and love and live. It was a time for young people. She wanted her son to be happy.

"I can't stand it any more, Mother," he said. He dropped down on a chair next to her. "I can't stand him any more. I'm going like Mayme—but I'm going to a big city—Philadelphia or Chicago—or even New York. I want a job where I can use my head and rise. I'm not going to give my life and body and strength to a farm for him to ruin. He can't get any hands. I know he's going to ask me to cut that wheat with him. I'm going to clear out. You're going to clear out with me, Mother!"

He took her hands, but she extricated them and ran one softly over his hardened paw. "No," she said calmly. "No, I'm not going, dear, I'm not clearing out." She seemed almost to croon it to the crescent of the moon that shone over the barn. "Everybody but me—everybody—but not me."

She seemed to have gained a kind of curious, pliable strength, the strength of the willow that has bent under many winds.

He pleaded with her.

"Mother! Mother! He can't get any hands. Please! Come with me, Mother. I'll take care of you."

She kissed him and patted his cheek. "It was Conrad and me in the first place. It'll be Conrad and me in the end."

She watched her son go out of the gate an hour later, between the silver white posts of the sagging gate. There was a neighbor's Ford waiting for him. He waved as it slowly rolled down the white road. She stood, waving, a white woman in a white doorway. As she mounted the stairs, she heard a door hastily close. When she came into the bedroom, Conrad lay with his face to the wall. His eyes were shut and his breathing was heavy. She knew that he had seen his son go away.

The next morning the sky was covered with a gray veil. The air seemed to weigh iron-heavy. Conrad and his wife did not speak at breakfast. Occasionally he laughed and his eyes twinkled as if there were some joke. "Well," he said, laying his heavy hand on her shoulder, "it's going to rain. But we're going to beat the rain. You and me, we're going to reap that field as far as we can, Tessie. We're going to save as much as we can from the rain."

She nodded, hastily stacked the dishes, put up some lunch, and followed him down the back steps and out to the fields. He

walked with a heavy, steady tramp that fell soft on the wilting grass. Occasionally he squinted at the sky and laughed out loud. He hitched a horse team and mounted to his seat on the reaper and drove clackety-clack out to the cleared space where he had left off two days before. Beside the slim, cropped, pale aisle, dotted with stacks, the gold forest of heady smelling grain stood motionless. No breeze was stirring. The larks wheeled up and around and around, nervous, scenting the coming rain. Behind the rattling reaper, patient, bending, straightening, bending, moved Tessie Hoor, binding the stacks, pitching them into a cart with great gaspy efforts that seemed to wrench her thin arms out of their sockets. There was no sun, but the curious burning silver light glared in her eyes.

All you could hear was the purl of the larks and the occasional shuddering of the horses, or Conrad Hoor shouting at his team and the steady whir of the machine.

About two o'clock the heat lightnings began to wince. First in brief twitches. Then in swift zigzags, followed by the nearing snarl of thunder. The snarl became like the beating of great drums and then the lightning usurped the whole sky like giant sheets of tin flung across it with a deafening crash and swiftly withdrawn; and then the music of the rain began to fall. Rain, gentle, sweet-smelling, sucked into a million pores of the earth, bringing sour mildew to the grain.

In the thick, torrential downpour between the fitful claps of thunder, when in the sudden weird light all things seemed to become realer than life and nearer together, Conrad Hoor's churring reaper turned to silver, the bending and upturned face of Tessie Hoor, following, was like a moonstone, her blue dress was pasted to her body and her tan shoes were as brown as the earth. All over her the rain merged with the sweat. Her breathing became alternately labored and faint. The path behind the reaper was no longer even. As the clanking machine turned a corner, the old man swayed.

Now and then he looked back at his wife. After about half an hour in the driving rain, with a smart wind beating them from the east, he called back to her, "Ye better quit."

Then, and then only, she crawled back to the house and pulled off her clothes; but before she could remove her last dripping undergarment, she had fallen on the bed, inert. Presently, in two hours or so, she came to, by herself. She was used to doing things

by herself. She closed all the windows in the house, shook her head at the damage done by the storm, heated a tub, bathed herself, climbed into dry things, and began to cook soup. Even through the closed windows she could hear the solitary reaper buzzing like the noise of a small fly against tight wires. A single one of those reapers under the most favorable conditions could cut fifteen acres a day.

At six o'clock he had not returned. At seven, when it was nearly black, she heard him dumping the stacks at the thresher.

Then he came staggering in. His face was as seamed with lines as if a knife had carved them lastingly into wood. His eyes sat back in their sockets and black pouches hung under them. The whites were traversed by little vivid red lines. His lips were bloated. His hair streamed over his face and a pool gathered about the blistered, mud-banked clods of his feet. He held onto the door jamb and swayed in the doorway. The muscles stood out on his brown, hard arms.

"You got supper most ready?" was all he asked.

"Yes, and I got dry clothes for you upstairs on the bed."

She followed him up and handed him a jar of goose fat for his ruined hands. As she walked down, her footsteps reëchoed. It was lonely without the children.

He sat at the kitchen table as she hauled down a bacon from the shelf. Her arms hurt so she could have screamed as she sliced, but she did not scream. Outside the rain beat and howled in the wind. The song of the ruined grain was drowned.

Gone the harvest. Gone the labor. Gone the dream. Gone the first-born, the gentle son. Gone the daughter of her flesh—gone to the city. Her hand was stilled as she held the knife over the bacon—lean strips, fat strips. She looked over at Conrad Hoor.

He looked back from where he sat at the table, with his chair facing her, his pipe in the left side of his mouth. His hard eyes cried. There was in them a kind of silent, frightened plea. "You and me. You and me."

She laid down the knife. He rose and slouched over to her. The rain beat outside and the man and the woman came close. His arm encircled her waist; she laid her head on his shoulder. They stood so. He patted her shoulder blades. His lips articulated, but no word came. Then he said, "Gotta begin again—fight—you and me, Tessie."

"Yes." She stroked his arm like the hair of a child. "Yes," she half crooned, "yes, yes."

Then he straightened. He looked into her eyes. He said, "No, Tessie, leave me. You go too, Tessie."

"No," she said, "No, no, Conrad. I ain't gonna leave you." Her hands sought his. He clasped them till they ached. He stood breathing hard. Her heart ached, too, swelling with something like joy. He needed her. For the first time in her life. Her children were gone. His body touched her breast, close. He was her children.

For a minute they stood so. Then he dropped her hands and went back to the table, put his pipe in his mouth, sat down and watched as the slices of bacon fell.

She turned to the yellow crock and reached for the eggs. The pan stood ready. Conrad leaned forward.

"Here!" he called, "I ain't got no appetite. I want somethin' hot, but I don't want all that food. Gimme the soup and put that stuff away. No use a-wastin' all that grub."

GOOD OLD UNCLE HOMER[1]

By NUNNALLY JOHNSON

HAD Myra Conklin been observant enough to note the faintly maniacal glint that came into her brother's eyes when he grasped the purpose of her hurried call, she might have been inclined to give the matter a second thought. For she knew Homer. At any rate, certainly, she would have spoken to Muriel, too, purely as a precaution against those foibles of fate which no man or woman can ever foresee precisely. But she was pressed for time, and it was all so trivial and annoying.

"I just got the wire," she explained rapidly, "and I haven't time to get Carrie. And I couldn't leave her with Hester. But she won't be the slightest trouble, I know. Just let her play around by herself during the afternoon and get her to bed by seven or seven-thirty."

"It's all right, perfectly all right," Homer assured her, blinking nervously behind his glasses. "You needn't bother—"

"I just have to go. It's the only train I can get, and we'll be back early tomorrow afternoon. Hester's bringing her over, and don't give her any candy. She can have some fresh vegetables for dinner, and Hester will bring the formula over. Give her a tablespoonful before you put her to bed."

"You don't need to bother at all, Myra—"

"Tell Muriel, will you? I haven't got a minute or I'd speak to her, but she won't be any trouble at all, and Max wired it was absolutely necessary I be there to sign the deed. So explain to Muriel, and we'll pick her up on the way from the station tomorrow afternoon."

She left, and Homer stood gazing thoughtfully after her, the suggestion of a faint interest stirring in his breast. He was a very sober and earnest young man, just rounding twenty-seven, and it had always been felt in the family that his mind was not quite as fluid as it might have been. In no sense, however, should this be regarded as a reflection, for he read at least ninety times as

[1] From *McCall's Magazine*, November, 1928. Reprinted by permission of the author.

many volumes as all of the other members of the family did together, including the in-laws, and there was positively no end to the number of well-considered theories he had worked out.

In his own words, he tried only to keep abreast of the times. It was characteristic of his thoroughness in this commendable endeavor that of late, for instance, he'd been so occupied with the newest books on the *dernier cri* in moral attitudes, on various and amazing forms of sensible marriage, on changing conditions in woman's relations to man, and on the just and intelligent union of male and female, which he bought as preparation for a possible marriage some day, that he really had no time to call on any girls.

"You've just got to face the fact," he would inform Muriel, who was his sister and widowed and apparently indifferent to the newer orders, "that conditions today are not what they were. In the past few years psychologists and psychoanalysts have completely revolutionized human relationship. Intelligence rules instead of chance and ignorance. You take children—"

"Not me," Muriel replied firmly. "Some may take children, but not me. Once yes; now no."

She was ten years older than her brother, for whom she kept house, and privately, and sometimes not so privately, he set her down as a Bourbon, as one of those stubborn conservatives who might stay the inevitable tide of a civilized attitude momentarily, but in the end would be left crushed and humiliated in the wake of a movement far too righteous and overwhelming to be halted long by mental pygmies.

Presently, then, when Myra had turned the corner, he sauntered back to the kitchen, where Muriel was about one of her endless domestic duties. He did not speak immediately; he was afraid his voice would betray this vague excitement he felt.

"In what way," she asked casually, "are we being allowed to lift a burden from our little sister's shoulders this time?"

"Why," he replied, a little uncertain, as he frequently was, at Muriel's manner, "she's sending Eunice over to spend the night."

Muriel turned from the stove in frank astonishment. "What for?" she demanded.

"Max wired her to come to Pittsburgh right away. She's got to be there to sign that deed in the morning."

"And where is Carrie?"

"She said she didn't have time to find her."

For a moment she stared at him, and then, shaking her head slowly, turned back to the stove. "Well!" she said.

No further conversation seeming likely, he strolled back to the living room, and idly got seven books from a shelf. All but one he stacked on a side table; the other he skimmed through, as one might to refresh the memory at the approach of a test. Then, this done, he got up and returned to the kitchen.

"You know, Muriel," he said earnestly, "I don't think we ought to regard this as any laughing matter."

"Am I laughing?" she asked in some surprise.

"I don't mean that. I mean that the care of a child in its formative years, even for a very little while, is a grave and important thing. I don't think most people realize that. And what's more, I think that it's just about a crime the way Myra is bringing Eunice up."

His sister regarded him with mild curiosity. "Out of the depths of what rich maternal experience," she asked politely, "do these profound observations on the care and training of children arise?"

He colored slightly. "All right," he said, "but you'll see, if she keeps on. You haven't read Schloegl, I suppose."

"Dr. Holt," she confessed, "is about as far as I've got."

"Well, if you'd read Schloegl, you'd be able to see what I mean. Take spankings, for instance. I suppose you still believe in spanking children."

"The broad and calloused palm of my hand," she confessed again, "has been laid on more than one."

"That's it!" he exclaimed. "Force! Violence! Break the child's will! Great heavens, woman, but do you realize that you would be striking a delicate and sensitive personality just in the dangerous stage of formation? You'd be surprised, I'll bet, to know that Schloegl has traced a homicidal mania directly to spanking in childhood."

"I say," Muriel asked, "but who would this genius, Herr Schloegl, be?"

"Ludwig Schloegl is the greatest living authority on the rational rearing of children, but of course you wouldn't know that," he explained with as much irony as his manner permitted. "Schloegl has studied the effects of spanking on hundreds of children, and if you would read his book, *The Rationality of the Child Intelligence*, you'd realize that it is positively criminal to spank a child during the formative period."

"What would you do in one of these juvenile crises," she asked, "debate the matter coolly, clearly and logically with the cunning little rascal?"

"Precisely—and not in baby talk, either. That's another thing Myra does, and I wouldn't be at all surprised, after what Schloegl says about the mental effects of baby talk, if Eunice grew up to be a moron."

"I wouldn't be surprised anyway," Muriel said. "But what, if you permit me to ask, is the significance of these illuminating remarks to me on the psychology of the child mind?"

"Only that we, anyway, must see that Eunice is treated in a rational manner. It's only a day, I know, but I don't mind telling you I was surprised myself at the apparently trivial things Schloegl says can leave a definite and lasting impression on the child mind. He tells about a chap who murdered a man in England named Baker. Everybody thought it was because Baker had run away with his wife, but Schloegl got hold of him and psychoanalyzed him and showed conclusively that in the man's mind was a definite subconscious phobia against men named Baker, because when he was a small child his mother had whipped him furiously for stealing buns. Now you may think that is nonsense—"

"May is not the word," Muriel admitted. "I *do* think it nonsense."

"Well, Schloegl says so, and Schloegl's an authority. All I ask is, let us treat Eunice as a rational, reasoning intelligence, a very delicately adjusted intelligence in fact, and I'm sure that if we take the trouble to penetrate to this child's mind we'll be astonished to find a reason which is sane and normal—"

"Well, I'll tell you, Homer," Muriel interrupted. "Somehow I just don't feel in the mood for penetrating Eunice's mind. So I'll tell you what I'm going to do: because you're my little brother, and you've read so many books, including Schloegl himself, I'm going to do a big-hearted thing. I'm going to relinquish all claim to taking care of this delightful child. All I'll suggest is that you don't forget to give her that dash-blamed formula before she goes to bed, if ever she does."

"You think it's a joke," he replied quickly, "but I don't mind saying I'm glad. Nobody around here seems to have the slightest interest in searching this child's mind, and I'll be glad to, if only to be of help to the poor child herself. I'll—"

The doorbell rang.

"That would be Hester," Muriel said, "bringing the guinea pig."

Fifteen minutes later Muriel walked quietly to the door of the living room and looked in. Vague smatterings of conversation had been coming steadily from there, and she knew from Homer's voice that he was making a noble effort to show his guest that they were just two mental equals talking, and that if she could just accept the fact that there was no superiority or inferiority between them, they could have some dandy discussions.

Eunice, a wide-eyed child of five, dainty now in a fresh pink frock, sat on a foot stool on the far side of the fireplace, looking gravely at her host, who was seated opposite, a steady, melting smile on his face, all of his attention overwhelmingly hers.

The effort to stabilize the relationship on the same intellectual plane appeared to be flagging, however, and Homer's smile seemed a little more set than it should have been. In fact, at that moment he was reflecting that the child was extremely unresponsive, even a bit dim-witted apparently, which was an unexpected development, for he had always thought of her as a trifle offensive in manner—the result, no doubt, of ignorant training. He'd had a notion to engage her in something of a literary discussion, and thus draw her out, but the chances of success in that direction were, he saw, quite remote.

"I'll tell you," Muriel heard him say to her genially, "you take your book and I'll take mine and we'll both read. We'll just play that we're two people in a library."

"What's a libwawy?"

He smiled; now they might be getting on. "Why, a library, dear, is a collection of books in a big building. Understand?"

She shook her head.

"Why, Eunice, you've seen the Public Library at Forty-second Street and Fifth Avenue—that big white building."

"No."

"Of course you've seen it," he contradicted her amiably. "Don't tell Uncle Homer you haven't seen it, because he's seen you see it—that is, I mean, he was there when you saw it. Right behind Bryant Park."

She looked at him blankly.

"Look, dear," he insisted, a little impatiently, "you've been in Bryant Park and Uncle Homer knows it, because Uncle Homer

was with mother when she took you there. So don't try to tell Uncle Homer you don't know where Bryant Park is."

She shook her head again. "No-o-o," she said, in a calm, quaintly hesitant voice.

"Nonsense, dear. You're absent-minded. First of all, now, you know where Fifth Avenue is—"

"No."

"Why, Eunice, you don't remember that broad street, where—er—where Cartier's is, and Finchley's, and Dobbs'—"

She was still shaking her head, and he sat back and glared at her. If she didn't know where Fifth Avenue was, then he didn't see how they were going to get any further.

"But certainly, dear, you know where Forty-second Street is, where the Times Building is, and Sterns'—"

It was clear to Muriel that he was now thoroughly nettled, and his face a little flushed with resentment at the child's refusal to remember even so memorable a thing as Fifth Avenue. She stepped into the room.

"Eunice, let me ask you a question."

"Hello, Aunt Muwiel."

"You remember the big stone lions."

"Oh, yes!" Eunice's eyes lighted.

"That," Muriel said, glancing at her brother, "is the building Uncle Homer is trying to make you remember."

She walked out then, followed by the furious glare which Homer had transferred to her from the child.

"I know," Eunice said to him. "What about it, Unca Homer?"

"Nothing," he said shortly. "Nothing at all. You just read your book like Uncle Homer tells you."

He retired then behind his copy of Schloegl, annoyed at himself, at Muriel, and at Eunice. There hadn't been much logic or rationalism in their discussion so far, but the child seemed a bit thick for logic. She probably had no mind by now, the way Myra treated her. He wasn't actually reading, and presently he became uncomfortably conscious that neither was Eunice; instead, she was staring at him.

He tried to ignore it, but there is always something uncanny in the round, clear, direct, unwavering glance of a child, something baffling to the adult mind, and it made Homer nervous. He shifted his position and held the book before his eyes, but he knew she was still looking silently at the top of his head, at his

hands, at whatever might be viewed past the inadequate screen, and his ears grew hot and red.

The truth was, in this instance, Eunice was reflecting over this entirely new and novel attitude she faced. In some way she sensed that there was something vulnerable about it, that she might profit through it, and she was trying to make up her mind what to ask for.

"Unca Homer," she said presently.

He lowered his book and regarded her warily.

"Unca Homer, tan I have a ticken?"

"A chicken?" He was relieved, pleased even, for now certainly, he felt, she promised to unfold her mind. "Why, I suppose—well, I don't know that we have one. I'll speak to Aunt Muriel."

She beamed, and he went out to the kitchen, his annoyance all gone. "Muriel," he said, "have you any chickens?"

"No."

"Very well, I'll go out and buy one. It seems to me that a chicken is a very small thing to deny a child, when there might be something very significant about her asking for one."

"It probably means she'll grow up to murder a man named Rooster," Muriel said indifferently.

Homer drove into Main Road and stopped in front of the five and ten cent store. A clerk nodded pleasantly to him as they entered and then bent over and took Eunice's hand. "Well, now," he said cordially, "I'll bet the 'ittle lady wants a playfing 'is nice day—"

"I beg your pardon," Homer said stiffly, "but the child knows English."

The clerk straightened up. "What?" he asked, staring blankly.

"I said it's not necessary to resort to that form of discourse. She'll be able to grasp normal pronunciation."

The man's mouth opened, but he said nothing, though thereafter he addressed them both in a manner that was cold, aloof and formal, enunciating his words with frigid precision.

"I wanna ticken," Eunice said.

"A chicken," Homer interpreted.

"I comprehend ticken," the clerk said. "If you will follow me," and he led them to a counter piled with stuffed chickens and rabbits and ducks. Eunice looked at them and her face fell.

"A *live* ticken, Unca Homer—I wanna *live* ticken. I don' wanna ole dead ticken—I wanna *live* ticken."

"A live chicken!" He looked at her in some dismay.

"A biddy, Unca Homer, a biddy."

"A what?"

"In the vernacular of a child," the clerk informed him with great politeness, "a biddy is one of a brood of recently hatched chickens."

"I understand baby talk as well as you do," Homer said. "I just didn't catch what she said."

"I thought perhaps you hadn't understood."

"I think perhaps you'd like a rap in the chin," Homer said furiously, and taking Eunice's hand, he led her out to the car. "Don't cry, dear," he said savagely as he put her in. "Uncle Homer will get you a biddy."

He didn't know, though, where he might get one until he'd driven around several blocks aimlessly. It was the first time, in fact, this precise problem had faced him, but presently he reasoned that one of the farms on the North Shore Road should be able to provide a small chicken, and he headed in that direction. Twenty minutes later he was addressing a large soiled man who appeared completely indifferent about all of life.

"How many?" he asked.

"One."

"One!" Apparently the farmer had never seen so abnormal a man as one who wanted only one small chicken.

"It's for my niece," Homer explained apologetically.

"I don't care," the man admitted, lapsing into his original state of world-weariness.

Homer carried the tiny yellow ball of fluff back to the car, and Eunice, her face and eyes alight with that maternal glow which apparently lives in little girls from birth, took it tenderly in her arms and smoothed its neck gently.

He turned the car back toward home, and out of the corner of his eye he could see, a soft yellow spot against the neat pink frock and a bare knee, the chicken, drawn into a hunched ball, its eyes closed in peace and comfort, and could hear, against the motor's purr, the child's low, sweet murmur. It made him sadly happy.

"Unca Homer."

"Yes, dear."

"T' ticken's cole."

He put out his hand and drew the car to a halt. "Then we'd better wrap it in this robe," he said when they'd stopped and felt the biddy, "and put it between us, to keep it warm." He folded it gently. "And you must keep your hand on it, because your hand's warm and that will make the biddy warm."

When they turned into the driveway presently, Eunice got out with the roll of robe in her arms and carried it into the house through the front door. Homer put the car in the garage.

When he came in the room Eunice was on the floor in front of the fire which Muriel had lighted, and Muriel herself, a faint smile, half of resignation, on her face, stood watching the child fumble with the bulky bundle. Then she got the right corner, and the robe lay stretched out on the floor. In the middle lay a yellow ball, as silent and motionless as death. Eunice leaned forward, suddenly frightened, and touched it, and her hand leaped back.

"It's dead!"

It was a sharp, heart-rending wail, and Homer caught his breath. For a second he saw only her face, a tiny child's face wrinkled in anguish as she looked around to him, to Muriel, for help, for someone to relieve somehow this stab of pain, as older ones had always relieved her pain, and then he stepped forward.

"No, no—"

"It's dead, Unca Homer, it's dead!"

"No, dear, it's just cold. We'll warm it—"

"No, it's dead, it's dead!"

She scrambled blindly to her feet, fists clinched in her eyes, and stumbled toward her aunt. Homer, all at once panic-stricken, reached for her, but it was a woman she wanted, and Muriel lifted and cradled her in her arms, pressing her tear-stained face against her breast.

"Wait! Wait, I say." Homer looked about wildly, grabbed up the dead chicken, and then to his sister's horror apparently prepared to hurl himself head foremost into the fire. Dropped to his knees and on one hand, he thrust his nose almost into the flames and began waving the chicken excitedly in the greatest heat.

"Look, Eunice, look! Look, I say! Uncle Homer's warming the chicken!"

"Homer!"

"Look, Eunice! Look at Uncle Homer! See Uncle Homer warm the chicken."

Eunice raised her head and watched him with reddened eyes that were all but hopeless.

"See, Eunice, see? See Uncle Homer? Don't cry, now; just watch Uncle Homer warm the chicken. He's getting it all—ouch!" He jerked his hand out of a darting flame, and then Muriel spoke to him firmly.

"Get up, Homer, you with your profanity in front of a child. You look like a fool, sticking your head in the fire like that. Get up before you are burned alive."

Eunice, suffering no apprehensions for her glowing uncle, but disappointed in what results she could see in the chicken, began to cry again, in little whimpers, and Muriel, with a last curt look at her brother, carried her out of the room. His face flushed and burning from the heat, Homer got up slowly and studied the chicken. There could be no further doubt that it was dead. Then, absently, he dropped it into his pocket and gazed about the room. From beyond the door he could hear Muriel and the child. For a few minutes he idled about, quite at a loss, and then, hopefully, he picked up the volume of Schloegl and sat down to seek comfort or aid or guidance there. Soon there was silence in the dining room and he knew Eunice had been taken to bed. He drew a quick sigh of relief.

Eunice woke the next morning with that enviable freshness denied anyone over ten. She sat perfectly still, gazing out of the window at the fluttering leaves of an oak, and then she became conscious of a discussion somewhere beyond her door.

"Muriel," she heard her Uncle Homer say gravely, "let us face facts squarely."

"Oh," Muriel recollected; "the impact on the delicately adjusted child mind."

Eunice listened further. She neither understood nor cared what they were saying, but it was always a treat to eavesdrop on older people, for there was no telling when they *might* say something she shouldn't hear.

"I know only this," he insisted; "A child's subconscious is a far, far too valuable thing for you or me or anybody else to neglect. And this that's happened to Eunice, this chicken's dying, I'm sure would be most profoundly interesting even to Schloegl

himself. For in all of his researches—and I don't mind saying that I went to the trouble of running through his book last night to find a similar example—he has not one episode of childhood comparable to it—not one!"

He stopped. From the guest room had risen a long wail, Eunice's customary manner of announcing her awakening. The mention of the chicken, which had made her little mouth curl unhappily at the recollection of her pet's death, had likewise suggested to her that this abstract interest in her might just as well be diverted into more personal channels. There was certainly nothing else worth hearing in the conversation.

"Unca Homer," the call came from the guest room, "is my baby ticken still dead?"

Muriel looked at him with a firm humor. "My boy," she said, "go right ahead and distract." She waved one hand eloquently. "The privilege of distracting is all yours."

Eunice looked up with an expression of hope in her eyes when he entered the room. For his part, though, there was naught but brisk happiness and health in his face, and an air of keen vitality and hearty goodwill about him. He was wearing, he felt, his most contagious personality.

"Ah, Eunice," he greeted her, "a splendid day, dear, a splendid day. As clear as crystal with only the slightest suggestion of a light haze in the east. A perfect October—"

"Did you make my ticken well, Unca Homer?"

"Why, no, dear—but as I was saying, if it weren't for that slight haze on the eastern horizon—"

"My ticken's all dead?"

"Oh, yes, indeedy, dear." He endeavored to convey the idea that it was just one of life's silly little pranks. "It's really a perfect October day—wait a minute, Eunice. Don't cry, dear. Wait just a minute. Wait—"

"What is it, Homer?" Muriel called.

"Wait! Hush! That is, hush—wait, Eunice! Wait, dear. Hush, Muriel. Wait—" He looked around for something to give to her. There was a cigarette lighter on the bureau, with no benzine in it. "Here, dear," he said, thrusting it into her hands. "See what a pretty cigarette lighter Uncle Homer has given you. See? See?"

Her tears dried instantly. "Mine to keep?"

"Why—er—yes, dear."

She gazed at it in awe, holding her breath, and turned it over and over. It was beautiful, perfectly beautiful; in fact, she could not see that the chicken, the poor dead chicken, had had any advantage whatever over this delightful shining gift. When she looked up, Homer was edging out of the room, and her eyes remained thoughtfully on the door. . . . What was all this, anyway?

Eunice ate her breakfast reflectively. There was something behind this; what it was she could not decide. All she was sure of was, she'd started to cry over the chicken, the poor dead chicken, and this much nicer gift had been handed to her. The man, of course, was soft, inexperienced. But there must be some explanation for this extraordinary maneuver, which certainly would never have been her mother's. It was much better.

When at length she finished and reached the porch, she had but one conclusion to go on, and that was that she owed it to herself to test this mention of the poor dead chicken again, to make sure that it was the key to the situation. Homer smiled at her amiably.

"Have a good breakfast, dear?"

She put one fist in an eye. "Poor baby ticken couldn't have no bweakfast," she started to sob.

He dropped his paper like a flash. "Wait a minute, dear. Just a minute, Eunice, don't cry. What"—he paused dramatically—"What would you say to taking a ride?"

She looked up happily. "In the car?" she asked.

"Yes!"

He ran in to get his hat, and she looked complacently at a robin on the lawn. So it *was* mention of the dead chicken! When he drove the car out of the garage, she found that Muriel was also in it, which annoyed her vaguely. All she wanted at present was Uncle Homer, and Uncle Homer alone. Now, however, there was nothing to do about it.

Muriel wanted to do her morning shopping. They stopped at a chain grocery store first and he and Eunice walked about while the man waited on Muriel. They didn't stop until she came to a large bag of animal crackers. Then her eyes lighted and she turned away to hide them.

"Unca Homer," she said innocently, leaning against the box, "you weckon my baby ticken'll get well f'om bein' dead—"

"Ah, Eunice, what lovely animal crackers!" he exclaimed, beaming at the nearest object of potential juvenile interest. "How would you like a little bag of animal crackers—"

"Homer," Muriel interrupted. "She's just had breakfast. They wouldn't set right on her stomach—"

"Nonsense! She'd like a little bagful."

Eunice led him out of the store, crunching elephants and horses and giraffes into her mouth. Cakes were all she wanted in the store, she mused; it might be just as well to carry him along easily. They got into the car and waited for Muriel. She wanted to go next, she said, to the drug store. Then to the butcher's, she explained, and there they could leave her; she'd walk home.

In the drug store, waiting for a bottle of citronella to be wrapped, she was not surprised to see Eunice leading her brother through the front door. The child ambled about aimlessly, Homer debonairly behind, and Muriel's mouth set in a straight line. Getting her parcel, she found them in front of the peanut brittle display, a clerk filling a bag.

"I'll walk to the butcher's," she said. "I hope you have your eye-teeth when you get in for lunch."

"What?" he asked in some surprise.

"Lunch is at one," she said, and walked out.

Muriel returned to the house, but it was not until one-thirty that the car drove into the yard. Waiting on the side porch, she heard Eunice prattling pleasantly and once or twice Homer's voice, not so pleasant, and then she went into the living room. The child came in first, her arms laden with an enormous doll, an engine from which six cars dangled, a doll bed, a trunk for doll clothes, a little ironing board, and several things which she could not make out. Homer followed, and his eyes avoided his sister when he said hello. Eunice dropped her trove on the floor and looked triumphantly at her aunt.

"See?" she said.

Homer started for the stair. "Going to wash up," he explained shortly.

Eunice followed him into his room and watched him while he took off his coat and vest. She didn't know what to say; she didn't know what to think. This was a morning without precedent. When he went into the bathroom she looked about casually, just to see if there were anything in this room she wanted; there

was no longer any novelty about it; it was just a matter of selecting the article.

It was then that she saw it, a cut-glass bottle in which Homer kept *eau de quinine,* for his hair, which was a little thin. It had been given to him by a girl, the only gift from a girl he had, and the girl was a commonsense girl whom he'd been courting, in a genteel fashion, for several years. It glistened and threw the sun back at the wall, and while it was not so fine a thing as the small ironing board, still she felt she might like it for her collection.

"Unca Homer," she said when he came back into the room, looking a bit distraught, "tan I have 'at bottle?"

"That!" He looked at her in horror. "I'm sorry, Eunice, but that's very dear to me. I'd give you anything—"

She looked out of the window, her little face squinting with tragic patience. As she looked she thought, and then tears came into her eyes, and she bowed her face into her folded arms.

"Do you fink," she asked with apparent irrelevancy, "my 'ittle baby ticken'll get well f'om bein' dead—"

He looked at her savagely for a second and then walked to the bureau and took the bottle to her.

"You may look at it, Eunice," he said, "but you can't have it—"

"I want it!"

"You can't have it, Eunice—"

Suddenly she was furious, furious in a midget fashion. This was the first refusal, the first rift in the power she had built up this morning. Doll and train and ironing board—and now he declined to give her this. Her tiny face grew red and she glared at him venomously. How dare he—

"I want it!"

"You can't have it—"

He stopped, pale. With a quick, malicious gesture she had thrown the beautiful cut-glass bottle at the radiator, and it lay in ten thousand gleaming fragments on the floor.

"Eunice!"

His cheeks blew up and his eyes bulged, and Eunice aghast at what she'd done, gazed at him in white terror.

"What's the idea!" He paid her the compliment of shouting at her as he would have at a man. He couldn't think, couldn't gauge things; the precepts laid down by the incomparable

Schloegl vanished like mist before the heat of a sun. "You—what's the idea! What's the idea. You hear me, what's the idea—"

She had begun to sob, but his heart was now a cold stone. Then he closed his lips tight. Muriel's voice floated up: "What is it now?" He strode across the room and slammed the door with the report like the crash of a cannon.

"Now," he said hoarsely. "Now! Now, you little hyena! Now you're going to get it—you're going to get it now, you—you hyena. Come here!"

Recovering her strength and voice at the same time, she gave a shriek and darted away. He was close behind her, grabbing and muttering incoherently, around the room, behind a big chair, in a corner, where she eluded him by a hair. Then he had her by the arm and with savage satisfaction was carrying her to the chair. Her terrified yells filled the house.

"Yell!" he encouraged her grimly. "Yell your head off—"

The door opened suddenly and Muriel came in, followed by Myra and Max. In another second Myra had her child in her arms, while Max stood leaning against the wall, shaking his head sadly at his brother-in-law. Homer stood up and blinked at them.

"You brute!" Myra was comforting Eunice with little pats. "What were you going to do—murder her?"

"She had no business breaking that bottle—"

"Just a minute," Max interrupted languidly. "Would someone mind explaining all of this bother to me?"

"She broke that bottle—"

"Boiled down," Muriel interrupted, "our good brother on the left is a student of the rational training of children. How this particular scene fits in, I don't quite know. But this charming child apparently discovered that if she mentioned a baby chicken he gave her which died yesterday, he was clay in her hands."

"And all those splendid toys downstairs?" Max asked.

"Little trophies," Muriel said. "Just little trophies, that's all."

The two sisters and Max exchanged a patient, understanding look, and Homer turned uncomfortably toward the window. Myra sat down and held Eunice so she could look directly into her eyes.

"Eunice," she said.

"Yes'm."

"Eunice, if ever—"

"He killed my baby ticken—"

"I didn't!" Homer exclaimed. "I never killed her chicken. If she says I killed her chicken—"

"Wait, Homer. Eunice, it's not Uncle Homer you're talking to now; it's mamma, understand?"

"Yes'm."

"Then listen close." Homer likewise listened. "If ever you bring up the subject of that chicken again, mamma's going to take down your pants and spank you as you've never been spanked before. You understand?"

"Yes'm."

"Very well. Run down stairs and get your hat and coat. We're going home."

She stood up and Eunice obeyed. "That," Myra said to Homer, "is another way of doing it." They went out, and at the door Max turned and saluted Homer gravely. "It's all," he said philosophically, "in a lifetime." Homer did not reply.

He looked at the walls for awhile and then stood at the front window. The Conklins, Eunice, Myra and Max, emerged from the front door. Eunice carried the doll, Myra bore the railroad train and trunk, and in Max's arms were miscellaneous articles.

Homer turned away, suddenly rid of any desire to witness the departure, and Muriel stood at the door, smiling.

"I doubt," she said gently, "that you have succeeded in saving her from any complex."

His eyes narrowed. "I trust not," he said firmly, with only a fleeting memory of Schloegl. "I trust that she grows up to commit some crime—and I trust also," he added with quiet hate, as his eyes fell on the bits of glass, "I trust also that they catch her in the act."

INNOCENCE[1]

By ROSE WILDER LANE

WHEN Mary Alice came quite awake her mother was rubbing her face with a cold, wet cloth. They were in the little room at the end of the car; the floor was shaking like the skin of a horse that tries to get rid of a fly, and underneath the floor the wheels were talking. Clickety-clack! they said, Clickety-clack!

"Wake up, baby," mother said. "We'll be there in a few minutes." She turned Mary Alice around and began buttoning up. A little light ran along the edge of the shining washbasin. When Mary Alice turned her head the little light ran away very quickly, when she turned her head the other way it stopped suddenly and ran back.

"Stand still dear!" mother said. The best, beautiful pink dress came jerkily down over Mary Alice's head and was buttoned. Then mother turned her around again and pushed into place the thin curved, red comb that held her hair tight. Mother's eyes were clear, like water, and full of happiness. Her two hands gave Mary Alice's face an excited little squeeze.

"We're going to see father and Uncle Charley again. Aren't you glad?" she said.

"Will there be pickaninnies?" Mary Alice asked, anxiously. Pickaninnies were children as black as coal; mother had promised that she would see them in Florida. Mother said yes, there would be pickaninnies.

Mary Alice sat on the chair while mother dressed. When she sat on the edge of the chair her legs disappeared; when she pulled herself back two feet popped up in front of her. That was because her legs bent; her legs had hinges in them, like doors. Mother's hair was very long, and no one could see at once all the lights that scampered through it. Mother's hands were going so fast that they were out of breath, and fluttered. When they

---

[1] From *Harper's Magazine*, April, 1922; copyright, 1922, by Harper & Brothers. Reprinted by permission of the author.

came to a snarl they jerked at it, but mother never cried. Her face in the glass smiled at Mary Alice.

"You remember Uncle Charley, don't you?" she said.

Mary Alice remembered Uncle Charley. When they lived at grandfather's he used to put her high on the big backs of the horses at the watering trough. She remembered his legs, going into the pile of hay in the car that had taken father and him down south to Florida. First his arms and head went in, and then one leg and then the other, and that was the last of Uncle Charley. Then there was nothing but hay. She must not tell any one that Uncle Charley was in the hay, because they were poor, and if people knew that Uncle Charley was going to Florida with father and the horses and the cows they would not let him go. For a long time Mary Alice had not spoken of Uncle Charley, but she remembered him. He was big and strong and always laughing.

When the train stopped they got down the high car steps and were alone in a gray light. Mother looked anxiously this way and that, and her hand hurt Mary Alice's. Then she dropped it, and father was there. "Hello! Here you are!" he said. He and mother looked at each other, and it was as though they were together in a warm little space. Mary Alice was outside, chilly and uncomfortable. She tugged at mother's sleeve and said, "Where are the pickaninnies?" Then they laughed and took her into the warmth.

"Didn't Charley come?" said mother, and father swung Mary Alice into the air and kissed her. His face was suddenly close and big, a brown, prickly face with deep creases in the cheeks.

The horses and wagon waited by the platform. Mary Alice was swung high over the wheel into the seat, father and mother climbed up beside her, and father clucked to the horses. The horses walked quickly, jerking their heads, and little plops of white dust rose from their feet. They passed a store and some low, unpainted houses with wide porches. Strange trees grew in the yards. Their branches grew as though they meant something strange and frightening; their leaves were like flat green hands with wide fingers, and their fruit was black. In one of these trees was a black boy. He sat on a branch and dangled black legs, and with one hand he picked a black fruit. His large mouth was very full of white teeth, and he bit the black fruit with them; he bit it through, and laughed. Mary Alice could not look away

from him; her head turned slowly and her eyes stayed fixed on him for a long time.

"Here we are, in the piney woods!" said father. The white road went curving between straight, tall gray trees that had no branches. Far overhead their green-black tops whispered breathlessly, without stopping, telling something terrifying. The gray trunks stood still in a gray light; they knew, but they were silent, and the pale ground looked up at them. A smell of dampness and of wet paintbrushes was in the air.

Father's cheerful voice sounded loud and false. Mother's voice was low and unrelenting, as though she were talking about telling lies. Uncle Charley was her little brother.

"You must must tell me what it is," she said.

Mary Alice watched the horses' ears. They turned this way and that, and reminded Mary Alice of birds sitting on a fence.

Suddenly mother cried out, as though some one had struck her. Mary Alice looked up quickly. Mother's face was broken. Mother was crying, and nothing was safe. Terror and strangeness reached out of the gray woods and seized Mary Alice, and she shrieked, and there was nothing anywhere but sobbing and screams. Father was talking to her, but she could not hear him; and he was holding her, but she could not feel that he was near. Then he was putting something into her hand and telling her to taste it. It was sweet and salty. Sugar cane, he said; she was to suck it. It was smooth and green and round, like a large stick of candy. The wagon was still jolting on, and she sat tasting the sugar cane through her sobs until she fell asleep. She fell asleep feeling a blackness of something that had got Uncle Charley and made mother cry.

But when she woke there he was. His big hands were holding her in the air, and he was laughing up at her. His face was red-brown and his eyes were very blue, and beneath the edge of his blue shirt was the strip of pinky-white skin; he had just come in from the fields and was putting her up on the big horse. No, there was the wagon and a strange zigzag fence and many large, fresh chips scattered around a new house in the piney woods. She was in Florida, and Uncle Charley was here, too, and safe.

"Oh!" she cried, hugging his neck tight. "Mother cried about you, and I was afraid!"

The last sob came unexpectedly out of her throat, and then

she felt a queer stillness. She slid to the ground. There was a strange woman, a black-haired, black-eyed, red-cheeked woman in a beautiful, bright-red dress. She was fascinating, like grandfather's big brown horse that lived behind bars and had once killed a man.

"This is your new Aunt Molly, Mary Alice," said mother. Mother's face was smiling, but mother was not smiling. Mary Alice took tight hold of mother's brown skirt and held out a hand.

"How do you do, Aunt Molly?" she said, carefully.

"The other hand, dear," said mother.

Mary Alice saw Aunt Molly's bare feet, bare and brown and dusty with white dust. She looked up the beautiful red skirt to Aunt Molly's hands that were on Aunt Molly's hips, and on up to the bright-colored face. The face tipped back, a thick, white throat came up out of the red collar, and suddenly Aunt Molly laughed a short, queer laugh.

"Well, nyow," she said, "I'm right proud to meet you," and she shook Mary Alice's hand as though she were making fun. But it was the right hand. Aunt Molly's red lips curled and showed her white teeth; she was like the big brown horse laying back his ears, and Mary Alice backed quickly against mother. Everything was wrong and she did not know why; she only wanted to get away, and, turning, she hid her face against mother and shut her eyes.

Then they were all going into the house. The house was made of new yellow boards and smelled good. There was a room with a cook stove and table, and a room with the big bed and Mary Alice's cot. It was a nice house, only Uncle Charley did not live with them any more. He lived in another house with Aunt Molly. Aunt Molly took him away, and at the gate he stopped to look back at mother. Mother and Mary Alice stood in the doorway and waved good-by to Uncle Charley, but Aunt Molly did not look back. She walked fast down the road, and her red skirt switched behind her like a tail.

Mother was very busy and did not say a word. She unpacked the trunk and put on her blue apron and let down the long braid of her hair that stayed in a knot only when she was playing grown-up. For mother was not really grown-up, like father; she liked to sing and dress dolls and play games with toes. Only to-day she did not feel like playing. She bathed

Mary Alice sternly in the tin washbasin, and swept, and got supper. Her forehead was pulled into little lumps, and her mouth was queer and tight. When father came in from doing the chores she dished up the potatoes and cut the johnnycake and set Mary Alice on the Bible in the chair without saying anything until father put his arms around her, and then she cuddled her head beside his chin and cried again.

"Oh, how could he? How could he?" she said.

"He didn't do it," said father, bitterly. "He's a Northerner and she wanted him. She got around him somehow. They say she drugged him."

Mary Alice sat amazed, holding her knife straight up in her fist. "Drugged," she said to herself. "Dragged. I drug; I dragged. She dragged herself around him. She drugged herself around him." It made a song in her mind and she began to sing it, pounding on the table with the handle of the knife, until mother startled her with a sharp, "Stop it, Mary Alice!"

Mary Alice went to sleep every night hearing the piney woods whispering together, and when she woke in her cot they were still whispering. The piney woods had no leaves, only long things like red and brown darning needles. She must not go far from the house—there were snakes in the piney woods. She might go with mother to bring water from the spring. The water came out in the ground and made a little pool that twisted in the middle, then it ran stealthily away into shadows. The air was thick and moldy with smells, and by the water grew a fascinating horrible plant that ate flies.

Uncle Charley came every day to help father dig a well outside the kitchen door. He was busy and did not feel like playing. He dug himself down to the waist and then down to the shoulders, and then he went down into the ground in a bucket on a rope. He sent up the bucket full of red mud, and father dumped it. Mary Alice played with the mud and made things; she set them in a row in the sun and they turned to rock. Mother said she was making mud pies, but they were not pies, they were just shapes she thought of. At noon Uncle Charley came out of the ground and washed and ate dinner. He said it was like old times to eat honest-to-gosh cooking again, and mother looked sad. Uncle Charley should not say honest-to-gosh; it was a bad word.

"Will you stay to supper, Charley?" mother said.

Uncle Charley made marks with his toe in the red mud. "Hang it all! yes," he said.

After supper he sat with father on the doorstep and mother sat near them in the rocking-chair and sang songs to them; they forgot it was bedtime. Aunt Molly came up the road in the moonlight, her face and her arms and her feet were white in the moonlight, and she stood at the edge of the piney woods and called:

"Charley!"

Mother asked her to come in, but she said, "No thanks; I reckon we-all'll be gitting along home."

Uncle Charley did not come any more to dig, and father and mother talked about it. Mother said they must be nice to Aunt Molly. She did not want to, but she pinned up her hair and put on her sunbonnet and she and Mary Alice went up the white road. Sunshine slanted through the piney woods and struck the white road. Lizards lay on the zigzag fence waggling their sleek throats, and ants went across the road in crawling lines, little red lines and big black lines. White dust was on the toes of Mary Alice's little shoes and mother's big shoes.

They came to Uncle Charley's house. It was made of logs, and skins were spread out on the walls. The ground around it was bare and hard and hens were walking about. Large bony dogs with flapping ears stood up and growled, but Aunt Molly came to the door and said:

"Hesh up, you ornery dawgs! I'm right proud to see you-all," she said, looking at mother's calico dress. "We-all ain't fine like Northerners, but sech as we got is good enough for we-uns. Light 'n' come in."

Mother laughed as though she had been running; she said polite things while they went into the house. It was logs on the inside, too, and bits of daylight came through between them. Women and many children were sitting around the fireplace. They were all bare-footed and wore queer gray dresses, and they all looked at mother's dress and at Mary Alice's shoes. A woman put out a long skinny arm and pulled Mary Alice close to her. The woman's face was all deep-brown wrinkles and her chewing mouth was somehow like a frog jumping.

"Nyow, here's a right peart little girl," she said. "I'd give a pretty for a little girl like you."

Mary Alice shyly said nothing, leaning against the woman's friendly knee.

Aunt Molly sat on her heels by the fireplace, mixing cornmeal and water with her fingers. She took handfuls of it and patted them flat between her hands; she made a print of her hands on each side. Mary Alice admired it very much. Then Aunt Molly laid the yellow cake in the ashes and covered it with ashes and made another.

Each woman had only one or two long yellow teeth, but they never stopped brushing them. They dipped little sticks into boxes of brown dust, and chewed, and spit into the fireplace. Mary Alice had never seen any one spit so far and so well. There was a box on the knee beside her, and she looked into it, politely. The woman understood; she dipped her stick into the box and twirled it until it was brown, and offered it to Mary Alice. Mary Alice took it eagerly, but mother's eyes opened wide, and then she shook her head.

"She's too little yet, I'm afraid," mother said, and her blue eyes were very blue in her pink face. "Thank the lady nicely, and put it back, Mary Alice," and mother looked around at the faces timidly.

"My childern's dipped snuff sence they was weanlings," said the woman.

Mary Alice wanted to cry, but she let the woman take back the stick. Aunt Molly stood up, and made again that frightening sound like a laugh. Mary Alice felt queer, as though she were big and mother little and something wanted to hurt mother; she went and stood with her back against mother.

The men came tramping in. They were Aunt Molly's brothers —tall, loud men, even bigger than Uncle Charley. They hung their guns on the wall and were noisy; they slapped their big hands on Aunt Molly's shoulders, and she laughed. Aunt Molly's black eyes seemed hot, her black hair was alive. It did not hang limp like the other women's, but each lock of it curled and twisted into the air. She did not look at Uncle Charley, and he did not speak to mother. All the women sat by the fire while the men ate, and Aunt Molly went back and forth with dishes. When her feet touched the floor they seemed to bound. The corn cakes smelled good and Mary Alice was hungry, but she was afraid of the big men, and even mother seemed strange.

Uncle Charley was the last of the men to go. He stood in the

doorway turning his hat in his fingers and not looking at anybody. Then he went away and all the women got up and began putting the children on the benches by the table and finding places themselves. Some one filled Mary Alice's tin dish with grease and meat and corn cake; there was a confusing noise of voices and tin cups rattling, a woman slapped a boy and he howled, and suddenly Mary Alice cried:

"I don't want nasty black things to eat with! Why aren't they white, mother, like ours?"

Everybody looked at her, and mother reached down and took her under one arm and carried her out of the house; Mary Alice did not know why. Mother did not listen to anything she said; mother set her down hard and held her head under one arm and lifted up her skirts and struck her from behind. Mary Alice yelled with amazement and terror. Mother struck her more than once, and then said:

"Now come in this house, and eat, and don't let me hear another word out of you!"

Mary Alice sat bowed on the bench and swallowed as much as she could. She was most miserable. Afterward they went home, and all down the white road Mary Alice did not say anything, only she looked up at mother now and then and felt confused. When they got home she hurried into the house and sat alone in a corner, holding her rag doll.

The days were forlorn. Uncle Charley did not come, father did not laugh, and mother never tickled toes any more when she pulled the covers off the cot in the mornings. Father had finished the well; there was no more red clay, and in the yard there were only lizards and ants to watch.

One night Mary Alice had a dream. She dreamed that some one came tapping at the door in the night. Father said, "Who's there?" and Uncle Charley's voice answered, very low. Father got up and lighted the lamp in the kitchen and mother got up. Mary Alice thought she sat up in bed and looked through the door into the kitchen.

Mother's long braid hung down her wrapper, and mother said to father: "No! I won't do it, Howard. Everything we own in the world is in this farm. You won't be driven off it while I have anything to say about it."

Father's wrinkles were deep black marks on his face above the lamp. He said, "Well, but Mary—"

"I don't believe it, anyway!" mother said. "She couldn't hate us like that. What have we ever done to her?"

Uncle Charley's voice was there, but Mary Alice could not see Uncle Charley. Mother turned quickly and spoke toward the voice.

"Well, why don't you?" she said. "You don't belong with such people. You used to be the finest boy in Webster County, and what's she doing to you? You know it isn't true; you know I've never said a word to turn you against her, but I say it now. Yes, leave her! Married or not married, there's some things wrong in the sight of God. If you'll come with us, Charley, we'll go. We'll go back home."

Then Mary Alice heard the piney woods whispering, and she was frightened and cold and wanted to call to mother, but did not dare.

Uncle Charley said, "It's too late, Mary."

Mother said: "It isn't too late. Yes, I say it. I don't care if you'd married her twenty times—"

Then Uncle Charley said a strange thing. He said: "Mary, you don't know—you don't know what she'd do. The moon's shining." Mother's face went all still and hard in the lamplight. Then she was out of sight, and Mary Alice heard her crying voice, "Oh, Charley, don't! don't!" and a terrible hoarse, gasping sound. Father coughed, and then he grew very large and very small and the terrible sounds went on and on, until Mary Alice opened her eyes. The sounds were only the whispering of the piney woods and mother was combing her hair in the morning.

"Where is Uncle Charley?" said Mary Alice. "Mother, is the moon shining?"

"What do you mean?" mother exclaimed. "You've been dreaming, Mary Alice. Nobody's been here. Moonshining is a bad word. You must never say it again." Mary Alice's bewilderment opened her mouth, but mother was so stern that she closed it again.

After breakfast mother took Mary Alice between her knees and spoke to her seriously. "I want you to listen to me, Mary Alice," she said. "You must never eat anything that any one gives you. Never eat anything until I give it to you, or father. Do you understand?"

"Oh, mother," said Mary Alice, "aren't you ever going to tickle my toes again, ever, ever, any more?"

Mother scrunched her up tight in her warm, clean-smelling calico lap and arms, laughing and catching her breath. But in a minute she was stern again. "Listen, dear. You must never, never eat anything until I say you may. Do you understand? Tell me, Mary Alice."

"I must never eat anything until you say I may," said Mary Alice, remembering hard. And next morning mother tickled her toes, but it was not as it used to be, and Mary Alice did not want mother to do it because she was asked.

One could play in the garden, putting the peanut blossoms to bed. Mary Alice had carefully picked up the peanut blossoms and dusted them, until father found her doing it. He laughed then, and called mother to laugh, too. Peanut blossoms must dig down into the ground to make peanuts. So now she put them in little holes and buried them—the peanut blossoms were glad because she was helping them.

"Well, I guess we'll have to live on the peanuts," father said. The cow was dead. He had found her in the piney woods with her legs cut, so he had had to kill her, and there would not be any little calf. Mother looked sick. She said: "How can human beings do such things! But I won't back down for them," she said; "it's like going away and leaving Charley."

There were no more peanut blossoms. Under the ground there were peanuts, and father was digging them up; some day mother would roast them. The banana plant in the yard had grown taller than Mary Alice; its broad leaves hung limp and warm in the sun. Beneath it on the ground a moth fluttered; it was alive, but it was covered with ants. The ants were eating it. Mary Alice got a grass stem and fought them. She poked them off as fast as she could, but they kept coming, and the poor moth fluttered. She must not touch moths, a touch brushed the weeny little feathers off their wings, and hurt them. Mary Alice fought the ants as fast as she could, but in a moment the moth jerked, twisted up its legs, and died. Mary Alice stood up. Aunt Molly was leaning on the fence, watching her from the shadows of a sunbonnet. She did not speak, but beckoned with her hand.

"See what I've fetched you, honey," she said, like a secret. She uncurled her fingers, and on her palm was a little red ball. "It's spruce gum," she said. "It grows in the piney woods. Your aunt Molly's fetched it and chawed it all soft for you."

She felt warm and grateful toward Aunt Molly. But Aunt

Molly's eyes were strange; their look came out of them and pushed Mary Alice's gaze down. She could not look at Aunt Molly. She turned the red ball over in her hand.

"Chaw it," said Aunt Molly. "Chaw it."

It was only to chaw; it was not something to eat. Mary Alice lifted it to her mouth, and then took it down and looked at it again. But it was not to eat. The screen door slammed, and she looked up guiltily.

"Mother, see!" she said. "See what Aunt Molly gave me! Mother, can I eat it? It's gum."

Mother looked at Aunt Molly. Aunt Molly stood up straight, and the sunbonnet fell back; her face came out hard and bright, and she smiled at mother.

"Yes, Mary Alice, you may have it," said mother, and just as joy leaped in Mary Alice, mother's hand came down quickly and took the red ball. "After supper," she said.

Mary Alice looked up, protesting, and was struck silent. Something vast and terrible was there, in the air, invisible, coming out of the eyes of Aunt Molly and mother. Mary Alice's legs stumbled as mother led her by the hand into the house.

Mother sat down and took Mary Alice into her lap. She rocked her for a while and then said:

"Mary Alice, I promised you the gum, and mother always keeps her promises. The gum is yours. Will you give it to me for a pan of peanuts?"

Mary Alice thought. She thought of the red ball, how good it looked, and she thought of hot, crackling peanuts.

"A large pan?" she asked.

"The black baking pan," said mother.

"All right," said Mary Alice. Mother got the black baking pan and filled it with peanuts. She put the pan in the oven and shut the oven door. Then she went out. Mary Alice sat on a stool and waited. She looked at the sunshine on the floor and at the ironing board laid on the backs of the two chairs; she heard the piney woods whispering, and the safe sound of the teakettle. Now and then she sniffed. She smelled the peanuts. She smelled them very loud. She began to smell them anxiously; they smelled burning. She was trying to open the oven door when suddenly some one seized her. Mother had her tight; mother was shaking and sobbing and laughing, her face was wet and twisted against Mary Alice's. Mary Alice shrieked aloud and struggled, screaming.

Father came in, running, the hoe in his hand. Mother cried: "She died! She's dead!" and laughed horribly.

Father shook them both. "O my God! O my God! What is it?" he said. "Answer me!"

Mother stumbled across the floor, carrying Mary Alice to the doorway. Outside, on the stain of red mud, the Plymouth Rock hen lay dead with her head on.

"I threw it to her, and she swallowed it, and died," said mother.

And Mary Alice sincerely wept, because she had liked the hen, too. Father and mother comforted her, and talked over her head.

There was no supper that night. Mary Alice was given a piece of bread and butter, and she was not to be put to bed. Father had hitched up the horses, and they were going back to grandfather's. Trunks and boxes were packed and piled in the wagon, with the stove and table and chairs and the sacks of peanuts. As soon as it was dark they started.

The piney woods were shadowy in the moonlight and things without shapes moved through them; the horses' feet made dull thudding sounds and the wagon creaked, the harness jingled. They had gone a long way, but Mary Alice was still awake when the horses shied and some one was holding on to the wheel and looking upward.

"Good-by!" Uncle Charley panted. "I just made it in time across the hill way. I thought I'd get there and fight 'em with you. But it's better for you this way. Don't stop. Keep going. They'll be at the house in half an hour. Good-by."

Mother leaned down to him. "Get in and come with us," she said. "Oh, Charley, how'll I ever stand it? We'll get you off, somehow, Charley. I can't go away and leave you here."

The piney woods were still, listening.

"God! Mary, I can't," Uncle Charley said. "You don't know her. She's got me. She'd have the revenuers after me to-morrow. I—I 'ain't got the nerve, any more. You better hurry on. Good-by. I— Good-by, Mary!"

Then he was gone, and father put his arm around mother and clucked to the horses. Mary Alice thought at first that mother was crying, but she was not; she was quite still.

"Aren't we going to see Uncle Charley again?" Mary Alice asked.

"Hush, Mary Alice!" said father.

The piney woods were filled with strangeness; the gray, straight trunks moved stealthily, and the road was a glimmer that went out in darkness ahead. But Mary Alice slipped away from all vague wonderings into the coziness of sleep.

TWO FRIENDS[1]

By GUY DE MAUPASSANT

PARIS was blockaded, famished, and suffering the throes of death. Sparrows were rare, indeed, on the roofs; and the eaves were being depopulated. People ate anything—no matter what.

As he was walking sadly one bright January morning along the outer boulevard, his hands in the trouser-pockets of his uniform and his stomach empty, M. Morissot, watchmaker by trade and wiseacre on occasion, stopped short in front of a brother-in-arms whom he recognized as a friend. It was M. Sauvage, an acquaintance from the river bank.

Every Sunday before the war Morissot used to set out at dawn, a bamboo rod in one hand, a tin box on his back. He used to take the Argenteuil railroad, leave it at Colombes, then go on foot to the island Marante. As soon as he had arrived at this place of his dreams, he would begin to fish; he used to fish until night.

Every Sunday he used to meet a plump and jolly little man there, M. Sauvage, haberdasher, of rue Notre-Dame-de-Lorette, another devotee of fishing. They often passed half a day side by side, their lines in their hands and their feet swinging above the current; and they had taken a liking to each other.

Some days they did not talk. Occasionally they chatted; but they understood each other admirably without saying anything, having like tastes and identical sensations.

In the spring about ten o'clock in the morning, when the rejuvenated sun raised a little streaming vapor on the tranquil river and poured the kindly warmth of the new season upon the backs of the two infatuated fishermen, Morissot would sometimes say to his neighbor, "Ah! What comfort!" and M. Sauvage would reply, "I don't know anything better." And that was enough to make them understand and esteem each other.

In the autumn toward the end of the day, when the sky,

[1] Translated by Elizabeth Brownell Collier

stained the color of blood by the setting sun, used to cast upon the water the shapes of scarlet clouds, purple the whole river, kindle the horizon, make the two friends as red as fire, and gild the trees already turning crimson—quivering with the chill of winter, M. Sauvage would look smiling at Morissot and remark, "What a spectacle!" And Morissot, admiring, would reply without lifting his eyes from his float, "That is worth more than the boulevard, eh?"

As soon as they recognized each other, they grasped hands energetically, deeply moved at meeting again in circumstances so different. M. Sauvage, heaving a sigh, mumured, "What doings!"

Morissot, very gloomy, groaned, "And what weather! To-day is the first fine day of the year."

The sky was, in fact, all blue and full of light.

They began to walk side by side, musing and sad. Morissot resumed, "And the fishing? Ah! What a happy memory!"

M. Sauvage asked, "When shall we go back there?"

They entered a small restaurant and drank a glass of absinthe together; then they began to walk the streets again.

Morissot suddenly stopped: "A second glass, eh?"

M. Sauvage consented: "At your service." And they entered another wine merchant's.

They were very giddy when they came out, muddled like those who have been fasting and who fill their stomachs with alcohol. It was growing mild. A caressing breeze tickled their faces.

M. Sauvage, to whose befuddling the soft air put the finishing touch, stopped: "If we went there?"

"Where is that?"

"To fish, of course."

"But where?"

"Why, to our island. The French outposts are near Colombes. I know Colonel Dumoulin; they will readily let us pass."

Morissot quivered with longing. "Enough said. I'm for it." And they separated to get their fishing-tackle.

An hour afterwards they were walking side by side on the highway. Presently they reached the villa that the colonel occupied. He smiled at their request and consented to their whim. They took up their walk again, fortified with a permit.

Soon they cleared the outposts, crossed deserted Colombes, and

found themselves at the edge of the little vineyards that fall away toward the Seine. It was about eleven o'clock.

Opposite, the village of Argenteuil seemed dead. The heights of Orgemont and of Sannois dominated the whole country. The great plain that stretches as far as Nanterre was empty, quite empty, with its cherry trees bare and its ground gray.

M. Sauvage, pointing with his finger at the summits, murmured: "The Prussians are up there!" Uneasiness paralysed the two friends before that deserted countryside.

"The Prussians!" They had never seen any of them, but they had felt them there for months, around Paris, ruining France, pillaging, massacring, bringing starvation, invisible, and all-powerful. And a kind of superstitious terror was added to the hatred that they felt for that unknown and victorious people.

Morissot stammered: "Well! If we should come to meet some of them?"

M. Sauvage replied, Parisian banter reappearing in spite of everything: "We should offer them fish to fry."

But they hesitated to venture into the fields, frightened by the silence of the whole horizon.

At last M. Sauvage decided: "Let us go. On our way! but with caution." With anxious eyes and strained ears they descended into a vineyard, bent double, creeping, availing themselves of bushes to cover them.

There remained a strip of bare ground to cross before they could gain the bank of the river. They began to run; and as soon as they had reached the bluff, they crouched in the dry reeds.

Morissot glued his cheek to the earth to hear whether any one was walking near by. He heard nothing. They were indeed alone, all alone.

They were reassured and began to fish.

Opposite them, the deserted island Marante concealed them from the other bank. The little restaurant was closed; it seemed to have been abandoned for years.

M. Sauvage caught the first gudgeon; Morissot got the second; and from moment to moment they pulled up their lines, each time with a little silvery creature wriggling at the end of the wire—a truly miraculous catch.

They tenderly slipped the fish into a close-meshed net pouch that was soaking at their feet. And a delicious joy penetrated

them, the joy that takes possession of one when one again finds a beloved pleasure of which one has been long deprived.

The good sun poured its warmth between their shoulders; they heard no more; they thought no more; they were unaware of the rest of the world; they fished.

But suddenly a muffled sound that seemed to come from underneath the earth made the ground tremble. The cannon again began to thunder.

Morissot turned his head; and above the bluff he perceived, down there on the left, the lofty silhouette of Mont-Valérien, which bore on its brow a white egret, a reek of powder that it had just spit out.

Immediately a second spurt of smoke came from the top of the fortress; and some moments afterwards a new detonation rumbled.

Then others followed; and from minute to minute the mountain kept shooting out its deadly breath, kept puffing its milky fumes, which rose slowly in the calm sky and made a cloud above.

M. Sauvage shrugged his shoulders. "See, there they are beginning again," he said.

Morissot, who was anxiously watching the quill of his float dip without stopping, was suddenly possessed by the anger of a peaceable man against the madmen who were fighting thus; and he grumbled: "They must be stupid to kill themselves like that."

M. Sauvage replied: "It's worse than beasts."

And Morissot, who had just caught a bleak, declared: "To say that it will always be so as long as there are governments."

M. Sauvage stopped him: "The Republic would not have declared war . . ."

Morissot interrupted him: "With kings one has war outside; with the Republic one has war inside."

And tranquilly they began to argue, unraveling great political problems with the sound sense of kindly and simple men, agreeing on this point, that one would never be free. And Mont-Valérien thundered without rest, demolishing French houses with cannon shot, grinding up lives, crushing human beings, putting an end to many a dream, to many an expected joy, to many a hoped for happiness, starting in the hearts of women, in the hearts of girls, in the hearts of mothers down there and in other places sufferings that would never end.

"It is life," declared M. Sauvage.

"Say rather that it is death," replied Morissot smiling.

But then they shuddered, terrified, sensing clearly that some one was walking behind them just then; and having turned their eyes, they perceived standing close to their shoulders four men, four tall men, armed and bearded, clothed like servants in livery, and covered with flat caps, taking aim at them with their guns.

The two lines slipped from their hands and began to go down the river.

In a few seconds they were seized, bound, carried off, thrown into a boat, and ferried across to the island.

And behind the house that they had believed abandoned they perceived a score of German soldiers.

A kind of shaggy giant who, astride a chair, was smoking a great porcelain pipe, asked them in excellent French: "Ah well, gentlemen, have you had good fishing?"

Then a soldier laid at the feet of the officer the net full of fish that he had taken care to bring away. The Prussian smiled: "Ah! ah! I see that it didn't go badly. But it's a question of something else. Listen to me, and do not be disconcerted.

"In my opinion, you are two spies sent to lie in wait for me. I capture you, and I shoot you. You were making a pretense of fishing in order better to hide your schemes. You fell into my hands; so much the worse for you; that is war.

"But since you came by the outposts, you surely had a password in order to return. Give me that password, and I will spare you."

The two friends, livid, side by side, their hands shaking in a faint, nervous tremor, were silent.

The officer resumed: "No one will ever know; you will return peaceably. The secret will disappear with you. If you refuse, it is death, and immediately. Choose."

They remained immovable, without opening their mouths.

The Prussian, imperturbable, resumed, stretching out his hand toward the river: "Reflect that in five minutes you will be at the bottom of that water. In five minutes! You must have relatives?"

Mont-Valérien still kept thundering.

The two fishermen continued standing, silent. The German gave orders in his own language. Then he shifted his chair from its place in order not to be too near the prisoners; and twelve men took their stand twenty paces off, their guns at their feet.

The officer resumed: "I give you a minute, not two seconds more."

Then he rose abruptly, approached the two Frenchmen, took Morissot by the arm, dragged him farther off, and said to him in a low voice: "Quick, that password? Your comrade will know nothing; I will have an air of relenting."

Morissot said nothing in reply.

The Prussian then dragged M. Sauvage off and put the same question to him.

M. Sauvage did not reply.

They again found themselves side by side.

The officer began to give commands. The soldiers raised their weapons.

Then Morissot's glance fell by chance on the net full of gudgeons, left in the grass some steps from him.

A ray of sunlight made the pile of fish, still struggling, glisten. Faintness came over him. In spite of his efforts, his eyes filled with tears.

He stammered: "Adieu, monsieur Sauvage."

M. Sauvage responded: "Adieu, monsieur Morissot."

They grasped each other's hands, shaken from head to foot by irrepressible trembling.

The officer cried: "Fire!"

The twelve shots made only one.

M. Sauvage fell on his nose like a block. Morissot, taller, wavered, pivoted, and tumbled across his comrade, his face to the sky, while bubbles of blood escaped from his tunic torn at the breast.

The German gave new orders.

His men scattered, then returned with cords and stones, which they fastened to the feet of the two dead men; then they carried them to the bluff.

Mont-Valérien did not cease to rumble, capped now with a mountain of smoke.

Two soldiers took Morissot by the head and the legs; two others got hold of M. Sauvage in the same way. The bodies, swung forcefully for a moment, were hurled far, described a curve, then plunged upright into the river, the stones dragging the feet first.

The water spurted up, bubbled, shivered, then grew calm, while tiny waves spread to the banks.

A little blood floated down.

The officer, still serene, said half aloud: "It is the fishes' turn now."

Then he went back toward the house.

And suddenly he perceived the net of gudgeons in the grass. He picked it up, examined it, smiled, and cried: "William!"

A soldier ran up in a white apron. And the Prussian, throwing him the catch of the two men who had been shot, commanded: "Fry those little creatures there for me immediately while they are still alive. That will be delicious."

Then he began again to smoke his pipe.

THE CASK OF AMONTILLADO[1]

By EDGAR ALLAN POE

THE thousand injuries of Fortunato I had borne as best I could; but when he ventured upon insult, I vowed revenge. You, who so well know the nature of my soul, will not suppose, however, that I gave utterance to a threat. *At length* I would be avenged; this was a point definitely settled—but the very definitiveness with which it was resolved precluded the idea of risk. I must not only punish, but punish with impunity. A wrong is unredressed when retribution overtakes its redresser. It is equally unredressed when the avenger fails to make himself felt as such to him who has done the wrong.

It must be understood that neither by word nor deed had I given Fortunato cause to doubt my good-will. I continued, as was my wont, to smile in his face, and he did not perceive that my smile *now* was at the thought of his immolation.

He had a weak point—this Fortunato—although in other regards he was a man to be respected and even feared. He prided himself on his connoisseurship in wine. Few Italians have the true virtuoso spirit. For the most part their enthusiasm is adopted to suit the time and opportunity—to practice imposture upon the British and Austrian millionaires. In painting and gemmary, Fortunato, like his countrymen, was a quack—but in the matter of old wines he was sincere. In this respect I did not differ from him materially: I was skillful in the Italian vintages myself, and bought largely whenever I could.

It was about dusk, one evening during the supreme madness of the carnival season, that I encountered my friend. He accosted me with excessive warmth, for he had been drinking much. The man wore motley. He had on a tight-fitting parti-striped dress, and his head was surmounted by the conical cap and bells. I was so pleased to see him that I thought I should never have done wringing his hand.

---

[1] From *Tales,* by Edgar Allan Poe, edited by Blanche Colton Williams, and published, 1928, by The Macmillan Company.

I said to him: "My dear Fortunato, you are luckily met. How remarkably well you are looking today! But I have received a pipe of what passes for Amontillado, and I have my doubts."

"How?" said he. "Amontillado? A pipe? Impossible! And in the middle of the carnival?"

"I have my doubts," I replied; "and I was silly enough to pay the full Amontillado price without consulting you in the matter. You were not to be found, and I was fearful of losing a bargain."

"Amontillado!"

"I have my doubts."

"Amontillado!"

"And I must satisfy them."

"Amontillado!"

"As you are engaged, I am on my way to Luchesi. If anyone has a critical turn, it is he. He will tell me—"

"Luchesi cannot tell Amontillado from Sherry."

"And yet some fools will have it that his taste is a match for your own."

"Come, let us go."

"Whither?"

"To your vaults."

"My friend, no; I will not impose upon your good nature. I perceive you have an engagement. Luchesi—"

"I have no engagement;—come."

"My friend, no. It is not the engagement, but the severe cold with which I perceive you are afflicted. The vaults are insufferably damp. They are encrusted with nitre."

"Let us go, nevertheless. The cold is merely nothing. Amontillado! You have been imposed upon. And as for Luchesi, he cannot distinguish Sherry from Amontillado."

Thus speaking, Fortunato possessed himself of my arm; and putting on a mask of black silk and drawing a *roquelaure* closely about my person, I suffered him to hurry me to my palazzo.

There were no attendants at home; they had absconded to make merry in honor of the time. I had told them that I should not return until the morning, and had given them explicit orders not to stir from the house. These orders were sufficient, I well knew, to insure their immediate disappearance, one and all, as soon as my back was turned.

I took from their sconces two flambeaux, and giving one to Fortunato, bowed him through several suites of rooms to the

archway that led into the vaults. I passed down a long and winding staircase, requesting him to be cautious as he followed. We came at length to the foot of the descent, and stood together on the damp ground of the catacombs of the Montresors.

The gait of my friend was unsteady, and the bells upon his cap jingled as he strode.

"The pipe," he said.

"It is farther on," said I; "but observe the white webwork which gleams from these cavern walls."

He turned towards me, and looked into my eyes with two filmy orbs that distilled the rheum of intoxication.

"Nitre?" he asked, at length.

"Nitre," I replied. "How long have you had that cough?"

"Ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!"

My poor friend found it impossible to reply for many minutes.

"It is nothing," he said, at last.

"Come," I said, with decision, "we will go back; your health is precious. You are rich, respected, admired, beloved; you are happy, as once I was. You are a man to be missed. For me it is no matter. We will go back; you will be ill, and I cannot be responsible. Besides, there is Luchesi—"

"Enough," he said; "the cough is a mere nothing; it will not kill me. I shall not die of a cough."

"True—true," I replied; "and, indeed, I had no intention of alarming you unnecessarily—but you should use all proper caution. A draught of this Medoc will defend us from the damps."

Here I knocked off the neck of a bottle which I drew from a long row of its fellows that lay upon the mould.

"Drink," I said presenting him the wine.

He raised it to his lips with a leer. He paused and nodded to me familiarly, while his bells jingled.

"I drink," he said, "to the buried that repose around us."

"And I to your long life."

He again took my arm, and we proceeded.

"These vaults," he said, "are extensive."

"The Montresors," I replied, "were a great and numerous family."

"I forget your arms."

"A huge human foot d'or, in a field azure; the foot crushes a serpent rampant whose fangs are imbedded in the heel."

"And the motto?"

"*Nemo me impune lacessit.*"

"Good!" he said.

The wine sparkled in his eyes and the bells jingled. My own fancy grew warm with the Medoc. We had passed through long walls of piled skeletons, with casks and puncheons intermingling, into the inmost recesses of the catacombs. I paused again, and this time I made bold to seize Fortunato by an arm above the elbow.

"The nitre!" I said; "see, it increases. It hangs like moss upon the vaults. We are below the river's bed. The drops of moisture trickle among the bones. Come, we will go back ere it is too late. Your cough—"

"It is nothing," he said; "let us go on. But first, another draught of the Medoc."

I broke and reached him a flagon of De Grâve. He emptied it at a breath. His eyes flashed with a fierce light. He laughed and threw the bottle upwards with a gesticulation I did not understand.

I looked at him in surprise. He repeated the movement—a grotesque one.

"You do not comprehend?" he said.

"Not I," I replied.

"Then you are not of the brotherhood."

"How?"

"You are not of the masons."

"Yes, yes," I said; "yes, yes."

"You? Impossible! A mason?"

"A mason," I replied.

"A sign," he said, "a sign."

"It is this," I answered, producing from beneath the folds of my *roquelaure* a trowel.

"You jest," he exclaimed, recoiling a few paces. "But let us proceed to the Amontillado."

"Be it so," I said, replacing the tool beneath the cloak and again offering him my arm. He leaned upon it heavily. We continued our route in search of the Amontillado. We passed through a range of low arches, descended, passed on, and descending again, arrived at a deep crypt, in which the foulness of the air caused our flambeaux rather to glow than flame.

At the most remote end of the crypt there appeared another

less spacious. Its walls had been lined with human remains, piled to the vault overhead, in the fashion of the great catacombs of Paris. Three sides of this interior crypt were still ornamented in this manner. From the fourth side the bones had been thrown down, and lay promiscuously upon the earth, forming at one point a mound of some size. Within the wall thus exposed by the displacing of the bones, we perceived a still interior crypt or recess, in depth about four feet, in width three, in height six or seven. It seemed to have been constructed for no especial use within itself, but formed merely the interval between two of the colossal supports of the roof of the catacombs, and was backed by one of their circumscribing walls of solid granite.

It was in vain that Fortunato, uplifting his dull torch, endeavored to pry into the depths of the recess. Its termination the feeble light did not enable us to see.

"Proceed," I said; "herein is the Amontillado. As for Luchesi—"

"He is an ignoramus," interrupted my friend, as he stepped unsteadily forward, while I followed immediately at his heels. In an instant he had reached the extremity of the niche, and finding his progress arrested by the rock, stood stupidly bewildered. A moment more and I had fettered him to the granite. In its surface were two iron staples, distant from each other about two feet, horizontally. From one of these depended a short chain, from the other a padlock. Throwing the links about his waist, it was but the work of a few seconds to secure it. He was too much astonished to resist. Withdrawing the key I stepped back from the recess.

"Pass your hand," I said, "over the wall; you cannot help feeling the nitre. Indeed, it is *very* damp. Once more let me *implore* you to return. No? Then I must positively leave you. But I must first render you all the little attentions in my power."

"The Amontillado!" ejaculated my friend, not yet recovered from his astonishment.

"True," I replied; "the Amontillado."

As I said these words I busied myself among the pile of bones of which I have before spoken. Throwing them aside, I soon uncovered a quantity of building stone and mortar. With these materials and with the aid of my trowel, I began vigorously to wall up the entrance of the niche.

I had scarcely laid the first tier of the masonry when I dis-

covered that the intoxication of Fortunato had in a great measure worn off. The earliest indication I had of this was a low moaning cry from the depths of the recess. It was *not* the cry of a drunken man. There was then a long and obstinate silence. I laid the second tier, and the third, and the fourth; and then I heard the furious vibrations of the chain. The noise lasted for several minutes, during which, that I might hearken to it with the more satisfaction, I ceased my labors and sat down upon the bones. When at last the clanking subsided, I resumed the trowel, and finished without interruption the fifth, the sixth, and the seventh tier. The wall was now nearly upon a level with my breast. I again paused, and holding the flambeaux over the mason-work, threw a few feeble rays upon the figure within.

A succession of loud and shrill screams, bursting suddenly from the throat of the chained form, seemed to thrust me violently back. For a brief moment I hesitated, I trembled. Unsheathing my rapier, I began to grope with it about the recess; but the thought of an instant reassured me. I placed my hand upon the solid fabric of the catacombs, and felt satisfied. I reapproached the wall; I replied to the yells of him who clamored. I re-echoed, I aided, I surpassed them in volume and in strength. I did this, and the clamorer grew still.

It was now midnight, and my task was drawing to a close. I had completed the eighth, the ninth and the tenth tier. I had finished a portion of the last and the eleventh; there remained but a single stone to be fitted and plastered in. I struggled with its weight; I placed it partially in its destined position. But now there came from out the niche a low laugh that erected the hairs upon my head. It was succeeded by a sad voice, which I had difficulty in recognizing as that of the noble Fortunato. The voice said—

"Ha! ha! ha!—he! he! he!—a very good joke indeed—an excellent jest. We will have many a rich laugh about it at the palazzo—he! he! he!—over our wine—he! he! he!"

"The Amontillado!" I said.

"He! he! he!—he! he! he!—yes, the Amontillado. But is it not getting late? Will not they be awaiting us at the palazzo, the Lady Fortunato and the rest? Let us be gone."

"Yes," I said, "let us be gone."

"For the love of God, Montresor!"

"Yes," I said, "for the love of God!"

But to these words I hearkened in vain for a reply. I grew impatient. I called aloud—

"Fortunato!"

No answer. I called again—

"Fortunato!"

No answer still. I thrust a torch through the remaining aperture and let it fall within. There came forth in return only a jingling of the bells. My heart grew sick on account of the dampness of the catacombs. I hastened to make an end of my labor. I forced the last stone into its position; I plastered it up. Against the new masonry I re-erected the old rampart of bones. For the half of a century no mortal has disturbed them. *In pace requiescat!*

PRELUDE[1]

By EDGAR VALENTINE SMITH

WHEN she was fifteen years old Selina Jo was doing a man's work in Pruitt's turpentine orchard; properly, though, her story begins earlier.

It was shortly before his daughter was born that Shug Hudsill brought his young wife, Marthy, to a sandy land homestead—twenty-five miles from the nearest railroad—in that section of the country which borders the Gulf of Mexico. There followed shortly the inevitable log rolling, at which the neighbors—mostly Hudsills themselves—contributed their labor. Shug furnished refreshments in the form of "shinny," an unpalatable, but unusually potent, native rum. Otherwise, his part in the erection of his future home was largely advisory. Despite this, though, the house, a two-room cabin of the "saddle-bag" type, was soon erected. Hand-split pine boards covered the roof and gave fair promise of keeping out the rain. An unglazed window and a door in each room, which would be closed with rough wooden shutters during inclement weather, served for ventilation and lighting. A stick-and-clay chimney at one end of the cabin gave outlet to the single fireplace which was to answer the dual purpose of cooking and heating.

By devious methods Shug accumulated two or three runty, tick-infested cows and a few razorback hogs. These were left, in the main, to shift for themselves. There were tough native grasses available and the cane brakes in Shoalwater River were close by. During severe weather such of the cows as chanced to be giving a few pints of thin, watery milk daily were fed a little home-grown fodder and corn on the ear. With proboscides inordinately sharpened for the purpose, the hogs probed for succulent roots in the rank undergrowth of the nearby swamp. When hog-killing season arrived Shug would shoulder his gun and slouch away for his winter's supply of meat. Neighbors charged it against him that he was not always careful to see to it that they

---

[1] From *Harper's Magazine*, May, 1923; copyright, 1923, by Harper & Brothers. Reprinted by permission of the author.

were his own shotes which he killed. Since it was a simple matter, though, to snip off the telltale ear markings of a dead pig, his pilferings, if a fact, were never proved.

Corn sprouted slowly in the thin soil; it grew up dispiritedly, and came to maturity stunted as to blade, stalk and ear. Sweet potatoes yielded generously in new ground; each year a fresh plot was cleared, broken and planted to these. A patch of sugar cane was always grown for molasses; a portion of this, it was generally conceded, was finally made into "shinny," since Shug was known to be an adept at its manufacture. Certain it is that he made frequent extended trips away from home with his wagon and yoke of oxen, never troubling to explain the reason for his absence.

It was amid these surroundings, sufficient in themselves, one would have said, to hinder physical, mental and moral growth, that the girl Selina Jo was born. The occasion was in no sense of the word an event with Shug and Marthy. Since all married people of their acquaintance had children, the baby simply represented to them, the inevitable. With the birth of the child, though, Marthy became barren.

For the first eighteen months of her existence the baby crawled about the cabin unnamed. Then it occurred to Marthy that their offspring ought to be christened.

"Shug," she suggested casually, "seems to me we ort to be namin' that air young 'un."

Shug, lolling in the shade of a water oak, shifted his quid and spat disinterestedly. "I ain't objectin' none," he replied.

"How 'bout callin' her 'S'liny Jo'?" Marthy asked.

"Fittin' enough name fer her, I reckin," Shug yawned.

As the child grew up she came to accept her parents as they had long since accepted her—merely as a bald fact. There was never the slightest evidence of parental affection upon the one side or of filial attachment upon the other.

Once Marthy came upon Shug whipping the girl with a switch.

"What you whippin' her fer?" she asked. Her tone was one of simple curiosity, nothing else.

"All young 'uns needs it," Shug replied virtuously, as he tossed the switch aside. "Hadn't been my daddy usetah whale me powerful, I wouldn't a been nigh the man I am now; not nigh."

It was a matter for remark between the parents that, even at a tender age, Selina Jo rarely emitted any outcry under punish-

ment. There burned in her sloe-black eyes, though, the flame of an emotion which she checked upon the surface.

One would have expected the girl to respond to the influence of heredity. Her parents, the cattle, the hogs, even the crops about her were stunted, half-starved in appearance. By contrast, Selina Jo, upon a daily ration made up almost exclusively of corn pone, molasses and home-cured pork as salt as ocean brine, defied all known dietary laws, and flourished amazingly. She was precocious, too. When she was only seven years old she could swear just as well—rather, just as wickedly—as could Shug himself. She learned early, though, that, as a source of information, her parents were practically *nil*. Thenceforth, the questions that had rushed to her lips were succeeded by a look of eternal interrogation in her somber eyes.

It was shortly after her twelfth birthday that a young school-teacher—the only one the community ever knew—came into the Hudsill settlement. Selina Jo was grudgingly allowed to attend the school. For six months the young man's enthusiasm held out. Then it waned and died. Few of the older people could either read or write, and the opinion among them seemed to be universal that what was good enough for them was good enough for their offspring. But before the school closed Selina Jo had learned the alphabet and a portion of the old-fashioned first reader.

She missed the school, and she always kept, close at hand, her thumbed and dog-eared book, the only one that she possessed. The school-teacher had lighted the fires of ambition within her. She came to be troubled by the realization that her mental development was lagging behind her physical growth.

"S'liny Jo," she informed herself one day in a fit of musing, "you air as p'izen strong as a gallon o' green shinny, but you don't know skercely nothin'." A moment later she added dejectedly: "Ner ain't got no chancet o' learnin', neether; not nary par-tick-le of a chancet!"

Shoalwater River afforded her chief means of diversion. She never remembered when or how she learned to swim. Every day that the weather permitted she enjoyed a plunge in the river. Soon she noticed that no less pleasant than the contact of the water with her naked body was the comfortable after-feeling of cleanliness. Following this, came a feeling of repugnance toward her shiftless and slovenly parents.

She had long since begun to assist with the crops. With the manure scraped from the cow lot she made the beds for the potatoes. At planting time she pulled the slips and set them out. She hoed the sugar cane and thinned the corn. During harvest she did almost as much work as Shug and Marthy combined.

Before she was fourteen she had broken a pair of young steers to the yoke. She split the rails and laid the fence for a new potato patch. Using for the purpose the young oxen which she had broken, she prepared the ground for planting. She was as tall as her father now, a slender, wiry creature, her symmetrical young body as free from blemish as the trunk of a healthy pine tree.

A vague unrest troubled her at times, though. Something occurred one day which intensified this. In a corner of the cabin she found a dust-covered photograph. Brushing it off, she gazed upon a face that was unfamiliar. She took the picture to Marthy.

"Maw," she asked, "who is this?"

Her mother glanced at it indifferently.

"Me," she answered listlessly.

"*You?*" Selina Jo gasped.

"Yeah. Ruther, it usetah be. Tuck when I married yore paw."

Selina Jo scanned the comely pictured face for some likeness to the slatternly creature who had given her birth. Wild resentment against something—she scarcely knew what—flamed in her heart. Suddenly she dashed the photograph to the floor and hurried from the cabin. As one reads the chronicle of her words, it must be remembered that her vocabulary was patterned after that of her father.

"Oh, Goddlemighty!" she burst out tempestuously, "I don't want to be like her! I ain't goin' to, neether!"

Her acquaintances were limited to the score of families, most of them relatives, and all of them mental and moral replicas of her own, who lived nearby. There was an almost abandoned church in the neighborhood where, at rare intervals, some itinerant preacher held services. Upon one occasion, though, Shug took the family to preaching in what was known as the Briggs settlement which was ten miles nearer the railroad. It was here that Selina Jo had it impressed upon her young mind just how people of her stripe were looked upon by those cast in another mold.

Shortly after they had seated themselves in the church, Shug, uncouth and unshaven on the men's side, and she and her mother

on that reserved for her sex, Selina Jo heard one of the women whisper to her neighbor:

"Some o' that Hudsill tribe!"

As the girl caught the slur in the words her face flushed darkly. She began to notice the unfavorable looks with which the men of the congregation were regarding her father. Even the children stared superciliously toward her mother and herself. Puzzled, vaguely hurt, at first she wondered why.

Lingering just outside the church at the close of services, she waited, shyly hopeful that some one would speak to her. No one paid her the slightest heed. In a land where a lack of hospitality was the one unpardonable sin, this alone was enough to convince her that something was terribly wrong somewhere. But she held her peace until they had completed the tedious homeward journey.

"Maw," she demanded abruptly, as soon as they were alone, "how come we ain't like other folks?"

"What air you talkin' about?" Marthy intoned querulously.

"Them folks in that air Briggs settlement."

"Wa'l?"

"They looked slanchwise at Paw when we went in an' set down." Selina Jo waited a moment, her face clouding at the thought. "An' them li'l old gals looked slanchwise at me, too. Durn 'em!"

"How kin I he'p the way they looked at us?" Marthy whined. "Treatin' us thatta way just 'cause we air pore."

" 'Tweren't that, neether," the girl insisted stubbornly. "Them men—most of 'em—was wearin' overhalls. The school-teacher said rich folks don't wear them kind o' clo'es to meetin'."

"Tryin' to git better 'n yore raisin', air you?" Marthy suddenly showed unwonted spirit. "Wa'l, gal, you kin just make up yore mind to be like yore pore maw an'—"

"I ain't goin' to be like you!" The words shot out with sudden passion. "I ain't!"

"God ha' mercy!" Marthy's usually expressionless face showed a trace of surprise at this outburst. "But I've allus said seein' lots o' things gits notions inta young 'uns' heads what ain't good fer 'em."

"Ner that ain't all I seed, neether," Selina Jo retorted. "They didn't none o' them folks—not nary one o' 'em—ast us home to eat a Sunday dinner with 'em."

At the conclusion of the church service she had seen invitations

to the noonday meal being extended and accepted right and left by the Briggs settlement householders. Since it was the custom to include the veriest stranger in these, the fact that none had been offered her people left room for only one conclusion: the Hudsills were looked upon by their neighbors as being unworthy to receive one. Slowly the impression fastened itself upon her brain that her family was hopelessly low in the social scale—"poison low-down," she would have phrased it. This conviction gripped her. It stung—and it stayed with her.

Fortunately, something occurred about this time to divert her thoughts temporarily. Three miles from Shug's home, Pruitt Brothers, turpentine operators, established a woods commissary. Selina Jo's first visit to the store left her gasping with pleasure. Filled with the usual gaudy assortment carried in stock by the general country store, to the half-starved eyes and soul of the woods-bred girl, the place was a wonderland. Dress goods in loud patterns dazzled her sight; vari-colored ribbons flaunted themselves tantalizingly before her gaze. But the one thing that charmed her, that held her spellbound, was a cheap, ready-made gingham dress. She made frequent unnecessary trips to the store merely to feast her eyes upon it. She would look from it to the faded homespun that she wore and sigh enviously. Once she even mustered the courage to ask the price. It was an insignificant sum, but the thought struck her with sickening force that it might just as well have been a thousand dollars. She had never owned a piece of money.

Slowly, as her yearning for the dress became almost unbearable, a plan formed in her mind. Coming in from her tasks one day, she found Shug, just returned from one of his mysterious periodical trips.

"Paw," she began timidly, "I—I got a hankerin'."

"S'posin' you have?" Shug's manner was more surly than usual. "A hankerin' never hurt nobody, yet."

"But, but I shore 'nough want sump'm."

"Wantin' an' gittin' is diffe'ent things. What is it?"

"They's the purtiest dress over to Pruitt's store," Selina Jo began eagerly, "an' it's made outen real gingham."

"Gingham?" Shug whirled about with a snarl. "What air you talkin' about, gal?"

Selina Jo's heart sank. "I ain't never had nary one," she offered placatingly. "An'—"

"Ner ain't never li'ble to, neether. Homespun's good enough fer yore pore maw an' it'll hatter be good enough fer you. I ain't goin' to be workin' myse'f to skin and bone to be fittin' out no young 'un in fancy riggin's."

"But, Paw, it don't cost much."

"It costes just that much more 'n you're goin' to git. Shet up!"

It was then that Selina Jo unfolded her plan. "I'm goin' to git me that air dress," she announced dispassionately. "I'm aimin' to pay fer it myse'f, too."

"How?"

"Yearnin' the money at public work."

"You?" Shug snorted derisively. "Whare'll you git any public work?"

"In Pruitt's turkentime orchard. They's a heap o' the work I kin do. I could do scrapin' er dippin'; reckin I could even do hackin'."

Shug had slumped into the one comfortable chair in the room. Turning his head, he glared at his daughter.

"You air not goin' to work in no turkentime orchard," he rasped. "You air goin' to stay right here an' he'p yore pore maw an' me. I told you oncet to shet up!"

It struck Selina Jo suddenly that life was, somehow, terribly one-sided and unfair. Other girls in the community, who didn't work as hard as she did, were beginning to wear gingham dresses for Sunday. She thought bitterly that in return for her slaving she had received bed and board—nothing more. By everything that was right, she reasoned, she had earned at least one store-bought dress. Yet it was roughly denied her. Some of the thoughts which had been haunting her for months struggled for expression. Her soul cried out against what was a patent injustice. But she managed to speak calmly.

"Fer as I kin figger it out, Paw," she said, "I been doin' my sheer o' keepin' this here fambly up. I broke them last yoke o' steers, an' one of 'em you was afeared to tech. I've split rails an' laid fences; I've broke new ground. An' the fu'st time I ast fer anything you say I cain't have it."

She ceased speaking for a moment, but her steady gaze never left Shug's face.

"Now, I'm goin' to work fer Pruitt," she continued slowly, "till I git me the money I need."

Something must have occurred during Shug's recent trip—probably a hurried flight from officers—to increase his normal perverseness. He had risen from his chair. Taking a heavy leather strap from the wall, he started toward Selina Jo.

"You air, huh?" Advancing, he fondled the strap suggestively. "You'll git a larrupin', that's what!"

With the first evidence of her father's intention, Selina Jo's face had flushed a brick red. Now it paled suddenly. She had not even been threatened with corporal punishment for years. Wild rebellion surged within her. A carving knife lay upon the rude deal table beside which she was standing. One slim, brown hand dropped down beside the knife. Her emotion visible only in the tumultuous heaving of her breast and the white, set expression of her face, she waited motionless, her dark, somber eyes gazing unwaveringly into Shug's face.

"Paw," she said evenly, "just you tech me oncet with that strop an', as shore as God gives me stren'th, I'll cut yore heart out."

An innate coward, Shug recognized a danger sign when he saw it. The hand which held the strap dropped to his side. He backed slowly away.

"You . . . you . . ." he sputtered and stopped.

"You an' Maw been sayin'," Selina Jo continued, "that I'm tryin' to be better 'n my raisin'. But I aint forgot how them Briggs settlement folks looked at us slanchwise. 'Tweren't 'cause we was p'izen pore, neether. They knowed, somehow, we was plumb low-down an' ornery. That's why they didn't none of 'em ast us to a Sunday dinner. They seed we was trash. Course I'm honin' to be better 'n that kind o' raisin'—an' I'm goin' to, too!"

Shug had retreated to the doorway, where he stood watching this new daughter of his with furtive, fearful eyes. The meanest of petty tyrants, when he held the whip hand, doubtless he expected that Selina Jo would exhibit the same trait. There was nothing of the bully in the girl, though. Threatened with what she considered to be undeserved punishment, she had simply acted upon the dictates of her immature mind and had seized upon the only means at hand to escape it.

It was several moments before Shug mustered courage to speak. "Sence you air goin' to do public work," he whined presently, " 'tain't nothin' but right you ort to pay fer yore bed an' board."

Selina Jo was glad to agree to this arrangement. When in-

formed of it later, Marthy sullenly acquiesced. She would have to do the housework now, which was no more to her liking than the realization that Shug would permanently pocket the money for their daughter's board.

It was the next day that Selina Jo sought out Lige Tuttle, woods foreman for Pruitt Brothers.

"I'm lookin' fer a job," she announced bluntly.

"Sorry," Tuttle answered brusquely, "but all our cooks are niggers."

"Cook?" was the scornful answer. "I ain't astin' to be no cook. I want shore 'nough work."

Tuttle smiled patronizingly. "What can you do?"

"Scrapin', dippin', er hackin'," was the confident answer.

"You?" Tuttle laughed softly. "Why, that's a man's work. It's hard."

"Any harder 'n breakin' bull yearlin's to the yoke? Er splittin' rails an' breakin' new ground?"

"Mean to say you've done all that?"

"I most bardaceously have!"

Labor was scarce at the time. Tuttle considered the girl's request carefully, asked a few more questions, and decided to take a chance.

"What's your name?" he asked.

"S'liny Jo."

"What else?"

It was the first time Selina Jo had ever been asked her surname; she felt the blood rush to her face.

"What's your last name?" Tuttle repeated.

The answer came almost inaudibly: "Hudsill."

"Shug Hudsill's young 'un?"

"How kin I he'p it?" the girl burst out passionately. "If you'd a been borned a Hudsill, you'd hatter be one, too!"

"Don't get mad, child." There was something in the spirit of this strange creature that Tuttle could not understand; but he respected it. "I wasn't aimin' to low-rate you none just because of your daddy. Come here to-morrow mornin', an' I'll try you out."

Selina Jo found that the work *was* hard. The dry, slippery pine needles underfoot made walking itself a task. She carried a heavy bucket into which she dipped the raw gum, emptying the bucket, when filled, into barrels scattered about the orchard.

From sunup till sunset, and later, she toiled; not once, though, did she grumble. She was too foolishly happy. What she was undergoing was the prelude to real existence, as she saw it. What better, she asked herself, could any strong, healthy girl desire than a steady job dipping turpentine for which she was paid real money?

Occasional passersby, strangers to the vicinity, amazed at seeing a girl engaged in such unusual work, would pause to ask friendly questions. The first flush of pleasure that this gave Selina Jo was quickly erased by the bitter after-tang of reflection: these people were kind because they did not know she was a Hudsill.

While with practice she developed skill, it was three months before she had saved the money she needed. The gingham dress had been laid aside for her. But her ambition had soared. A beautiful dress above a pair of bare legs and feet would never do. Then, too, since her only item of headgear was the sunbonnet which she wore every day, she would need, besides shoes and stockings, a hat.

The day came at last, though, when she could make her purchases. With her arms filled with bundles, she started out joyously on her three-mile walk home.

A half-mile from the commissary she paused indecisively at a crossroads. The right-hand road, leading to Shoalwater River, meant the lengthening of her journey a full mile; but the river, with its promise of a cooling plunge enticed her. As she stood hesitant, trying to decide, she observed a stranger approaching on horseback. She drew aside to let him pass, but he reined in his horse and hailed her.

"Evenin', little sister! Live hereabouts?"

"Down the left-hand fork a piece." Selina Jo bent her steady glance upon the stranger. "Who air you?"

"I'm Holmes—sheriff of the county."

Instinctively the girl drew back. "What air you wantin' o' me? I ain't done nothin'."

"Lord bless you, little sister," the sheriff laughed, "I'm not after you. Thought may be as you live round here you might tell me something I want to know."

It seemed that a murder had recently been committed in the bay-shore country ten miles distant. Circumstances pointed to the guilt of two men who had been arrested. Assuming that the murderers had passed through the Hudsill section en route to or

from the scene of the crime, the sheriff was seeking evidence to prove this.

Strangers were enough of a rarity in the neighborhood to be remembered easily. Selina Jo recalled two men who had passed that way whose description fitted those charged with the murder.

Sheriff Holmes was elated. "Would you like a trip to Eastview?" he asked.

"Eastview?" Selina Jo's heart skipped a beat. "That's town, ain't it—whare the railroad trains is at?"

"Yes. We'll want you there a week from to-day." The sheriff filed in a blank subpœna and extended it to the girl. "Look me up in the courthouse soon as you get to town."

Selina Jo's breathless announcement that she was going to court created a flurry at home until Shug learned why she had been summoned. Then he breathed easily.

It was decided that she could use the oxen and wagon for the trip, as Eastview was twenty-five miles distant. This method of travel, being slow, would necessitate an early start on the day before the trial. When that day dawned, though, one of the oxen was found to be indisposed. Selina Jo assembled a lunch of corn pone and side meat, filled a small bottle with molasses, and, dressed in her new finery, set out on foot.

Within an hour the new shoes began to pinch. She took them off, tied them together by their strings and slung them over her shoulder. The stockings were rolled into balls and stuffed into her pockets.

Late in the afternoon she bathed her feet and legs in a brook just outside Eastview and donned shoes and stockings again.

It was dusk when she arrived at the sheriff's office. An overflow crowd at the single hotel necessitated her staying with Sheriff Holmes' family that night.

With the inborn timidity of the woods-bred girl, she remained there until summoned to court in the late forenoon of the following day. By the time her evidence was concluded, though, she had partially overcome her shyness, and was ready for sightseeing.

Wandering about the interior of the courthouse, she marveled at the white plaster walls. Then she watched several people using the sanitary drinking fountain. Presently she found courage to try it herself. The technic she found to be rather difficult, but after she had mastered it she became a frequent patron.

Later, she ventured outside the courthouse.

Sheriff Holmes found her during the noon recess. She had commandeered a small goods box which she was using as a seat. Her enraptured gaze was fastened upon a scene across the street. Three large, two-story frame buildings, painted a dazzling white, stood upon a lot which occupied an entire block. Beneath the branches of huge water oaks, scores of girls, dressed in white blouses and dark-blue skirts, could be seen.

Sheriff Holmes smiled understandingly. "Like it?"

Selina Jo did not even turn her head. "Whose is them air li'l gals?" she asked breathlessly.

"The state's—for the present," was the answer.

"Who?"

"The state. That's the reformatory for girls."

It was plain that the remark conveyed no information to Selina Jo. "Do which?" she asked.

"When girls—young ones, like you—break the law," the sheriff explained, "they bring them here to be reformed."

"What's re-formed?"

"Well . . . it's like this: before they let a girl go again, she has to prove that she's been changed for the better."

"Changed?" Selina Jo looked up with a quick indrawn breath. "They makes 'em diffe'ent f'um what they was?"

"Ye-e-es . . . that's about it, I guess."

"Do they learn 'em outen books in there?"

"Oh, yes; they have regular hours for study."

"An' could—could a gal git in there what didn't know nothin' but a part o' the f'ust reader?"

"You don't understand, yet, child. It's only for girls who do wrong. Now, a girl like you never would go there."

Selina Jo sighed dejectedly. Her eyes caressed the buildings with their spotless white walls and wide-flung shutters, and the groups of girls scattered about the lawn.

Presently she pointed to a high iron picket fence which enclosed the lot. "What the fence fer?" she asked.

"Why, if that fence wasn't there, little sister, half the girls there would light out before midnight," the sheriff answered.

"They'd run away?" Selina Jo shook her head incredulously. "F'um them purty houses?"

Since it would be impossible for her to reach home that day, she spent another night with the sheriff's family. In her dreams

she saw white-painted buildings fashioned of real lumber. There was real glass in the windows, too; they weren't just yawning black holes in the walls. And the chimneys were of brick; so different from the flimsy stick-and-clay affair that leaned drunkenly against one end of the cabin at home. Home! She seemed to sicken at the thought.

Her dreams were peopled with girls in white blouses and blue skirts, thousands of them, it seemed to her. They were all within an iron-fenced inclosure, beckoning to her to enter; and she was always just on the outside.

With morning came thoughts of her work in the turpentine orchard. Inexplicably, a vague dissatisfaction awoke within her. The idea began to burn itself into her consciousness that, though she might spend a lifetime in honest toil there, she would always be referred to as "one of that Hudsill tribe." Apparently there was no escape from that.

During breakfast she was unusually quiet and thoughtful. With a shy acknowledgment of thanks, she accepted the liberal lunch provided by the sheriff's wife and made her adieus. Two miles outside the town she left the highway. A hundred yards from the road she seated herself upon a log and grimly prepared to wait.

Darkness had fallen when she again entered Eastview and cautiously approached the reformatory from the rear. She scaled the iron fence with comparative ease. Crouching low, she crept toward a lighted window on the ground floor. Two girls of about her own age sat at a study table. Standing before the window, Selina Jo spoke.

"Kin I come in?" she asked softly.

One of the girls screamed slightly; the other, after her first involuntary start of amazement, seemed wonderfully self-possessed.

"Sure, Rube!" she invited cordially. "Step right in!"

Selina Jo climbed over the low window sill into the room.

"What you doin' here?" one of the girls asked.

"I'm j'inin' o' this here re-formin' place," was the unruffled answer.

"You're *wha-a-at?*"

Very simply Selina Jo made known her intentions.

"But you'll be caught, sure as shootin'," one of the girls objected. "In the first place you've got no uniform."

Naturally, Selina Jo expected to be discovered sooner or later; but she had prepared for this eventuality—as she thought.

"Maybe we can fix that," the other girl broke in eagerly. "There's that old blouse of mine and your extra skirt. Gee! I wish we could put it over! Wouldn't old Iron Jaw be wild?"

Between them they rigged a uniform for Selina Jo. At the nightly inspection she crept under the bed. Later, she slept on a pallet.

The fortunate indisposition of a girl across the hall solved the breakfast problem. Selina Jo, taking the vacant place in the formation, passed undiscovered for the moment.

Among the many contingencies which she could not have provided against, though, were the sharp eyes and keen memory for faces possessed by Mary Shane, the matron in charge. As the girls were forming for certain duties shortly after breakfast, Selina Jo felt a heavy hand upon her shoulder. She looked up into the stern face of the matron.

"What are you doing here?" was the curt inquiry.

"Me?" Selina Jo's attempt at surprise was ludicrous. "I—I b'long here, ma'am."

"You do? You ought to know me then. What is my name?"

Instinct told the girl that this must be the matron. "Old Iron Jaw," she answered unabashed.

Mary Shane smiled grimly. "Come with me," she ordered. She led the way, Selina Jo following meekly, to her little cubby-hole of an office.

"Now, then," the matron commanded sternly, "tell me the truth. How did you get in here?"

"I—I clumb that fence."

"Why?"

"Just 'cause, ma'am, I nacherly got to git re-formed," was the perfectly serious answer. "I ralely b'long here. I'm so p'izen mean they ain't no other place fitten fer me."

"What's your name?"

Now it came, not hesitantly, but proudly—even defiantly: "S'liny Jo Hudsill!"

Mary Shane knitted her brows thoughtfully: "Hudsill?"

"Yes'm. Them low-down, sneakin', ornery Shoalwater River Hudsills, ma'am. Ever'body in the county knows 'bout 'em. They air the shif'lesses' fambly that ever was borned. An'

what's furdermore, I'm the hellraisin'es' one o' the intire gin'ration!"

"What are you trying to tell me, child?"

"Just how tarnation mean I am, ma'am."

In her plans for forcibly entering the reformatory, Selina Jo had hit upon the idea of charging herself, when her presence should be discovered, with an assortment of crimes sufficient to insure her incarceration for an indefinite period. It seemed to her now that the moment for her confession had arrived.

"Last mont', ma'am," she continued earnestly, "I burned down three cow stalls. Right atter that I went inta my own blood uncle's cornfiel' an' pulled up ever' smidgin's bit o' his young corn—pulled it smack up by the roots, ma'am. Ner that ain't all, not nigh all. I almost hate to tell you this'n, ma'am. But last week I stabbed a li'l nigger baby to death. Killed him dead. Dead as—"

"Hush, child, hush!" the matron ordered. "You did none of those things. Now then: Tell me—the truth!"

It came then—the truth—a story haltingly told of a child's scarcely understood heartache for self-betterment. Selina Jo didn't want to stay in the reformatory long, she said; only long enough to learn all there was in the books. Then she would be willing to leave. She would change her name and go away off somewhere. Maybe the folks there, not knowing that she was a Hudsill, would invite her to a Sunday dinner when she went to meeting.

People, some of them, rather, said of Mary Shane that her long association with the so-called criminally inclined young had rendered her immune to every human emotion. But as the recital progressed, the matron turned her back suddenly and strode over to a window.

Presently the story was finished.

"An' please, ma'am," a voice was asking hopefully, "I kin stay now, cain't I?"

Mary Shane did not reply for a moment. "I'm afraid not, child," she said presently. Few who thought they knew her would have recognized the matron's voice. "You—you've done nothing to be kept here for. You'll have to go home."

Then it was that Selina Jo's heart broke. She flung herself upon the matron.

"Oh, God, ma'am," she sobbed, "please don't make me go

back! I *ain't* goin' back! I don't want to be one o' them low-down Hudsills all o' my endurin' days. I want to be somebody, like other folks is. I don't want to have a passel o' dang li'l old gals lookin' at me slanchwise when I go to meetin'. You don't know what it is, ma'am, to have a hankerin'. I want to be changed! I want to be made diffe'ent! Ma'am, I just *got* to git re-formed!"

Mary Shane had opened her mouth to speak, to check this outburst; suddenly her iron jaws closed with a snap.

"Come with me, child," she said. "We'll see the superintendent." A moment later she added: "Jim Wellborn generally runs this reformatory to suit himself, anyway!"

The matron was the one person connected with the institution who took whatever liberties she chose. When she wished to be particularly impressive, she addressed people by their full names.

"Jim Wellborn," she said brusquely, as she and Selina Jo entered the superintendent's office, "this girl wants to tell you something. You listen closely."

Wellborn, big and broad-shouldered, had glanced up as they entered. His quizzical glance had rested first upon the girl; now he looked at Mary Shane.

"When you've heard her story," the matron continued, "if you can't find some way to keep her here so she can learn to live the life that Almighty God has shown her that she's fitted for, why I'll undertake the job of looking after her myself and the reformatory can get another matron."

"Hm-m-m!" Superintendent Wellborn's gray eyes twinkled; but he did not smile outright. "Well . . . the reformatory is fairly well satisfied with its present matron. Good-day, Mary Shane! Sit down, little girl."

The matron closed the door and returned to her office. For nearly an hour she sat, idle, at her desk. It was the first of the month; there were statements to be prepared, reports to be rendered, bills to be checked. But it was patent that her mind was upon none of these things. From time to time she glanced up impatiently at some noise in the hallway. Presently there came the sound of hurrying footsteps. She whirled her chair about.

Selina Jo stood in the doorway. Questions, answers, were unnecessary. The flush in her cheeks, the flame in her sloe-black eyes, blazoned her happiness to the world. As she realized

what the superintendent's decision had been, an answering light gleamed, momentarily, in Mary Shane's face. Characteristically, though, it was quenched upon the instant, as she slipped once more, automatically, into her habitual mask of granite.

But even a granite mask—since it is only a mask—cannot stifle a heart song; at best, it can only muffle it. For as she went about the prosaic business of acquainting Selina Jo with her duties, Mary Shane was well aware that, somewhere, deep within herself, a small voice was chanting over and over:

"For this one—just this one, Lord—who comes of her own accord to be changed, for this single one who wants to be made different, I thank Thee!"

BLUE MURDER[1]

By WILBUR DANIEL STEELE

AT Mill Crossing it was already past sunset. The rays, redder for what autumn leaves were left, still laid fire along the woods crowning the stony slopes of Jim Bluedge's pastures; but then the line of the dusk began and from that level it filled the valley, washing with transparent blue the buildings scattered about the bridge, Jim's house and horse-sheds and hay-barns, Frank's store, and Camden's blacksmith shop.

The mill had been gone fifty years, but the falls which had turned its wheel still poured in the bottom of the valley, and when the wind came from the Footstool way their mist wet the smithy, built of the old stone on the old foundations, and their pouring drowned the clink of Camden's hammer.

Just now they couldn't drown Camden's hammer, for he wasn't in the smithy; he was at his brother's farm. Standing inside the smaller of the horse paddocks behind the sheds he drove in stakes, one after another, cut green from saplings, and so disposed as to cover the more glaring of the weaknesses in the five-foot fence. From time to time, when one was done and another to do, he rested the head of his sledge in the pocket of his leather apron (he was never without it; it was as though it had grown on him, lumpy with odds and ends of his trade—bolts and nails and rusty pliers and old horseshoes) and, standing so, he mopped the sweat from his face and looked up at the mountain.

Of the three brothers he was the dumb one. He seldom had anything to say. It was providential (folks said) that of the three enterprises at the Crossing one was a smithy; for while he was a strong, big, hungry-muscled fellow, he never would have had the shrewdness to run the store or the farm. He was better at pounding—pounding while the fire reddened and the sparks flew, and thinking, and letting other people wonder what he was thinking of.

---

[1] From *Harper's Magazine,* October, 1925; copyright, 1925, by Harper & Brothers. Reprinted by permission of the author.

Blossom Bluedge, his brother's wife, sat perched on the top bar of the paddock gate, holding her skirts around her ankles with a trifle too much care to be quite unconscious, and watched him work. When he looked at the mountain he was looking at the mares, half a mile up the slope, grazing in a line as straight as soldiers, their heads all one way. But Blossom thought it was the receding light he was thinking of, and her own sense of misgiving returned and deepened.

"You'd have thought Jim would be home before this, wouldn't you, Cam?"

Her brother-in-law said nothing.

"Cam, look at me!"

It was nervousness, but it wasn't all nervousness—she was the prettiest girl in the valley; a small part of it was mingled coquetry and pique.

The smith began to drive another stake, swinging the hammer from high overhead, his muscles playing in fine big rhythmical convulsions under the skin of his arms and chest, covered with short blond down. Studying him cornerwise, Blossom muttered, "Well, *don't* look at me then!"

He was too dumb for any use. He was as dumb as this: when all three of the Bluedge boys were after her a year ago, Frank, the storekeeper, had brought her candy: chocolates wrapped in silver foil in a two-pound Boston box. Jim had laid before her the Bluedge farm and with it the dominance of the valley. And Camden! To the daughter of Ed Beck, the apple grower, Camden had brought *a box of apples!*—and been bewildered too, when, for all she could help it, she had had to clap a hand over her mouth, and run into the house to have her giggle.

A little more than just bewildered, perhaps. Had she, or any of them, ever speculated about that? . . . He had been dumb enough before; but that was when he had started being as dumb as he was now.

Well, if he wanted to be dumb let him be dumb. Pouting her pretty lips and arching her fine brows, she forgot the unimaginative fellow and turned to the ridge again. And now, seeing the sun was quite gone, all the day's vague worries and dreads—held off by this and that—could not be held off any longer. For weeks there had been so much talk, so much gossip and speculation and doubt.

"Camden," she reverted suddenly. "Tell me one thing; did you hear—"

She stopped there. Some people were coming into the kitchen yard, dark forms in the growing darkness. Most of them lingered at the porch, sitting on the steps and lighting their pipes. The one that came out was Frank, the second of her brothers-in-law. She was glad. Frank wasn't like Camden; he would talk. Turning and taking care of her skirts, she gave him a bright and sisterly smile.

"Well, Frankie, what's the crowd?"

Far from avoiding the smile, as Camden's habit was, the storekeeper returned it with a brotherly wink for good measure. "Oh, they're tired of waiting down the road, so they come up here to see the grand arrival." He was something of a man of the world; in his calling he had acquired a fine turn for skepticism. "Don't want to miss being on hand to see what flaws they can pick in 'Jim's five hundred dollars' wuth of expiriment'."

"Frank, ain't you the least bit worried over Jim? So late?"

"Don't see why."

"All the same, I wish either you or Cam could've gone with him."

"Don't see why. Had all the men from Perry's stable there in Twinshead to help him get the animal off the freight, and he took an extra rope and the log-chain and the heavy wagon, so I guess no matter how wild and woolly the devil is he'll scarcely be climbing in over the tailboard. Besides, them Western horses ain't such a big breed; even a stallion."

"All the same—(look the other way, Frankie)—" Flipping her ankles over the rail, Blossom jumped down beside him. "Listen Frank, tell me something; did you hear—did you hear the reason Jim's getting him cheap was because he killed a man out West there, what's-its-name, Wyoming?"

Frank was taking off his sleeve protectors, the pins in his mouth. It was Camden, at the bars, speaking in his sudden deep rough way, "Who the hell told you that?"

Frank got the pins out of his mouth. "I guess what it is, Blossie, what's mixed you up is his having that name 'Blue Murder'."

"No sir! I got some sense and some ears. You don't go fooling me."

Frank laughed indulgently and struck her shoulder with a light hand.

"Don't you worry. Between two horsemen like Jim and Cam—"

"Don't *Cam* me! He's none of *my* horse. I told Jim once—" Breaking off, Camden hoisted his weight over the fence and stood outside, his feet spread and his hammer in both hands, an attitude that would have looked a little ludicrous had anyone been watching him.

Jim had arrived. With a clatter of hoofs and a rattle of wheels he was in the yard and come to a standstill, calling aloud as he threw the lines over the team, "Well, friends, here we are."

The curious began to edge around, closing a cautious circle. The dusk had deepened so that it was hard to make anything at any distance of Jim's "expiriment" but a blurry silhouette anchored at the wagon's tail. The farmer put an end to it, crying out from his eminence, "Now, now, clear out and don't worry him; give him some peace to-night, for Lord's sake! Git!" He jumped to the ground and began to whack his arms, chilled with driving, only to have them pinioned by Blossom's without warning.

"Oh, Jim, I'm so glad you come. I been so worried; gi' me a kiss!"

The farmer reddened, eying the cloud of witnesses. He felt awkward and wished she could have waited. "Get along, didn't I tell you fellows?" he cried with a trace of the Bluedge temper. "Go wait in the kitchen then; I'll tell you all about everything soon's I come in. . . . Well now—wife—"

"What's the matter?" she laughed, an eye over her shoulder. "Nobody's looking that matters. I'm sure Frank don't mind. And as for Camden—"

Camden wasn't looking at them. Still standing with his hammer two-fisted and his legs spread, his chin down and his thoughts to himself (the dumbhead) he was looking at Blue Murder, staring at that other dumbhead, which, raised high on the motionless column of the stallion's neck, seemed hearkening with an exile's doubt to the sounds of this new universe, tasting with wide nostrils the taint in the wind of equine strangers, and studying with eyes accustomed to far horizons these dark pastures that went up in the air.

Whatever the smith's cogitations, presently he let the hammer down and said aloud, "So you're him, eh?"

Jim had put Blossom aside, saying, "Got supper ready? I'm hungry!" Excited by the act of kissing and the sense of witnesses to it, she fussed her hair and started kitchenwards as he turned to his brothers.

"Well, what do you make of him?"

"Five hundred dollars," said Frank. "However, it's your money."

Camden was shorter. "Better put him in."

"All right; let them bars down while I and Frank lead him around."

"No thanks!" The storekeeper kept his hands in his pockets. "I just cleaned up, thanks. Cam's the boy for horses."

"He's none o' my horses!" Camden wet his lips, shook his shoulders, and scowled. "Be damned, no!" He never had the right words, and it made him mad. Hadn't he told Jim from the beginning that he washed his hands of this fool Agricultural College squandering, "and a man-killer to the bargain"?

"Unless," Frank put in slyly, "unless Cam's scared."

"Oh, is Cam scared?"

"Scared?" And still, to the brothers' enduring wonder, the big dense fellow would rise to that boyhood bait. "Scared? The hell I'm scared of any horse ever wore a shoe! Come on, I'll show you! I'll show you!"

"Well, be gentle with him, boys; he may be brittle." As Frank sauntered off around the shed he whistled the latest tune.

In the warmth and light of the kitchen he began to fool with his pretty sister-in-law, feigning princely impatience and growling with a wink at the assembled neighbors, "When do we eat?"

But she protested, "Land, I had everything ready since five, ain't I? And now if it ain't you it's them to wait for. I declare for men!"

At last one of the gossips got in a word.

"What you make of Jim's purchase, Frank?"

"Well, it's Jim's money, Darred. If *I* had the running of this farm—" Frank began drawing up chairs noisily, leaving it at that.

Darred persisted. "Don't look to me much like an animal for women and children to handle, not yet awhile."

"Cowboys han'les 'em, pa." That was Darred's ten-year-old, big-eyed.

Blossom put the kettle back, protesting, "Leave off, or you'll get me worried to death; all your talk . . . I declare, where *are* those bad boys?" Opening the door she called into the dark, "Jim! Cam! Lan's sake!"

Subdued by distance and the intervening sheds, she could hear them at their business—sounds muffled and fragmentary, soft thunder of hoofs, snorts, puffings, and the short words of men in action: "Aw, leave him be in the padlock to-night." . . . "With them mares there, you damn fool?" . . . "Damn fool, eh? Try getting him in at that door and see who's the damn fool!" . . . "Come on, don't be so scared." . . . "Scared, eh? Scared?" . . .

Why was it she always felt that curious tightening of all her powers of attention when Camden Bluedge spoke? Probably because he spoke so rarely, and then so roughly, as if his own thickness made him mad. Never mind.

"Last call for supper in the dining-car, boys!" she called and closed the door. Turning back to the stove she was about to replace the tea water for the third time when, straightening up, she said, "What's that?"

No one else had heard anything. They looked at one another.

"Frank, go—go see what—go tell the boys to come in."

Frank hesitated, feeling foolish, then went to the door.

Then everyone in the room was out of his chair.

There were three sounds. The first was human and incoherent. The second was incoherent too, but it wasn't human. The third was a crash, a ripping and splintering of wood.

When they got to the paddock they found Camden crawling from beneath the wreckage of the fence where a gap was opened on the pasture side. He must have received a blow on the head, for he seemed dazed. He didn't seem to know they were there. At a precarious balance—one hand at the back of his neck—he stood facing up the hill, gaping after the diminuendo of floundering hoofs, invisible above.

So seconds passed. Again the beast gave tongue, a high wild horning note, and on the black of the stony hill to the right of it a faint shower of sparks blew like fireflies where the herding mares wheeled. It seemed to awaken the dazed smith. He opened his mouth *"Almighty God!"* Swinging, he flung his arms toward the shed. *"There! There!"*

At last someone brought a lantern. They found Jim Bluedge lying on his back in the corner of the paddock near the door to the shed. In the lantern light, and still better in the kitchen when they had carried him in, they read the record of the thing which Camden, dumb in good earnest now, seemed unable to tell them with anything but his strange unfocused stare.

The bloody offense to the skull would have been enough to kill the man, but it was the second, full on the chest above the heart, that told the tale. On the caved grating of the ribs, already turning blue under the yellowish down, the iron shoe had left its mark; and when, laying back the rag of shirt, they saw that the toe of the shoe was upward and the cutting calk-ends down they knew all they wanted to know of that swift, black, crushing episode.

No outlash here of heels in fright. Here was a forefoot. An attack aimed and frontal; an onslaught reared, erect; beast turned biped; red eyes mad to white eyes aghast. . . . And only afterwards, when it was done, the blood-fright that serves the horses for conscience; the blind rush across the inclosure; the fence gone down. . . .

No one had much to say. No one seemed to know what to do.

As for Camden, he was no help. He simply stood propped on top of his logs of legs where someone had left him. From the instant when with his *"Almighty God!"* he had been brought back to memory, instead of easing its hold as the minutes passed, the event to which he remained the only living human witness seemed minute by minute to tighten its grip. It set its sweat-beaded stamp on his face, distorted his eyes, and tied his tongue. He was no good to anyone.

As for Blossom, even now—perhaps more than ever now—her dependence on physical touch was the thing that ruled her. Down on her knees beside the lamp they had set on the floor, she plucked at one of the dead man's shoes monotonously, and as it were idly swaying the toe like an inverted pendulum from side to side. That was all. Not a word. And when Frank, the only one of the three with any sense, got her up finally and led her away to her room, she clung to *him*.

It was lucky that Frank was a man of affairs. His brother was dead, and frightfully dead, but there was to-morrow for grief. Just now there were many things to do. There were people to be gotten rid of. With short words and angry gestures he cleared

them out, all but Darred and a man named White, and to these he said, "Now first thing, Jim can't stay here." He ran and got a blanket from a closet. "Give me a hand and we'll lay him in the ice-house over night. Don't sound good, but it's best, poor fellow. Cam, come along!"

He waited a moment, and as he studied the wooden fool the blood poured back into his face. "Wake up, Cam! You great big scared stiff, you!"

Camden brought his eyes out of nothingness and looked at his brother. A twinge passed over his face, convulsing the mouth muscles. "Scared?"

"Yes, you're scared!" Frank's lip lifted, showing the tips of his teeth. "And I'll warrant you something: if you wasn't the scared stiff you was, this hellish damn thing wouldn't have happened, maybe. Scared! you a blacksmith! Scared of a horse!"

"Horse!" Again that convulsion of the mouth muscles, something between irony and an idiot craft. "Why don't you go catch 'im?"

"Hush it! Don't waste time by going loony now, for God's sake. Come!"

"My advice to anybody—" Camden looked crazier than ever, knotting his brows. "My advice to anybody is to let somebody else go catch that—that—" Opening the door he faced out into the night, his head sunk between his shoulders and the fingers working at the ends of his hanging arms; and before they knew it he began to swear. They could hardly hear because his teeth were locked and his breath soft. There were all the vile words he had ever heard in his life, curses and threats and abominations, vindictive, violent, obscene. He stopped only when at a sharp word from Frank he was made aware that Blossom had come back into the room. Even then he didn't seem to comprehend her return but stood blinking at her, and at the rifle she carried, with his distraught bloodshot eyes.

Frank comprehended. Hysteria had followed the girl's blankness. Stepping between her and the body on the floor, he spoke in a persuasive, unhurried way. "What you doing with that gun, Blossie? Now, now, you don't want that gun, you know you don't."

It worked. Her rigidity lessened appreciably. Confusion gained.

"Well, but—oh, Frank—well, but when we going to shoot him?"

"Yes, yes, Blossie—now, yes—only you best give me that gun; that's the girlie." When he had got the weapon he put an arm around her shoulders. "Yes, yes, course we're going to shoot him; what you think? Don't want an animal like that running round. Now first thing in the morning—"

Hysteria returned. With its strength she resisted his leading. "No, now! *Now!* He's gone and killed Jim! Killed my husband! I won't have him left alive another minute! I won't! *Now!* No sir, I'm going myself, I am! Frank, I am! *Cam!*"

At his name, appealed to in that queer screeching way, the man in the doorway shivered all over, wet his lips, and walked out into the dark.

"There, you see?" Frank was quick to capitalize anything. "Cam's gone to do it. Cam's gone, Blossie! . . . Here, one of you—Darred, take this gun and run give it to Camden, that's the boy."

"You sure he'll kill him, Frank? You *sure?*"

"Sure as daylight. Now you come along back to your room like a good girl and get some rest. Come, I'll go with you."

When Frank returned to the kitchen ten minutes later, Darred was back.

"Well, now, let's get at it and carry out poor Jim; he can't lay here. . . . Where's Cam gone *now*, damn him!"

"Cam? Why, he's gone and went."

"Went where?"

"Up the pasture, like you said."

"Like I—" Frank went an odd color. He walked to the door. Between the light on the sill and the beginnings of the stars where the woods crowned the mountain was all one blackness. One stillness too. He turned to Darred. "But look, you never gave him that gun, even."

"He didn't want it."

"Lord's sake; what did he say?"

"Said nothing. He'd got the log-chain out of the wagon and when I caught him he was up hunting his hammer in under that wreck at the fence. Once he found it he started off up. 'Cam,' says I, 'here's a gun; want it?' He seemed not to. Just went on walking on up."

"How'd he look?"

"Look same's you seen him looking. Sick."

"The damned fool!" . . .

Poor dead Jim! Poor fool Camden! As the storekeeper went about his business and afterwards when, the ice-house door closed on its tragic tenant and White and Darred had gone off home, he roamed the yard, driven here and there, soft-footed, waiting, hearkening—his mind was for a time not his own property but the plaything of thoughts diverse and wayward. Jim, his brother, so suddenly and so violently gone. The stallion. That beast that had kicked him to death. With anger and hate and pitiless impatience of time he thought of the morrow, when they would catch him and take their revenge with guns and clubs. Behind these speculations, covering the background of his consciousness and stringing his nerves to endless vigil, spread the wall of the mountain: silent from instant to instant but devising under its black silence (who-could-know-what instant to come) a neigh, a yell, a spark-line of iron hoofs on rolling flints, a groan. And still behind that and deeper into the borders of the unconscious, the storekeeper thought of the farm that had lost its master, the rich bottoms, the broad, well-stocked pastures, the fat barns, and the comfortable house whose chimneys and gable-ends fell into changing shapes of perspective against the stars as he wandered here and there. . . .

Jim gone. . . . And Camden, at any moment.

His face grew hot. An impulse carried him a dozen steps. "I ought to go up. Ought to take the gun and go up." But there shrewd sanity put on the brakes. "Where's the use? Couldn't find him in this dark. Besides, I oughtn't to leave Blossom here alone."

With that he went around toward the kitchen, thinking to go in. But the sight of the lantern, left burning out near the sheds, sent his ideas off on another course. At any rate it would give his muscles and nerves something to work on. Taking the lantern and entering the paddock, he fell to patching the gap into the pasture, using broken boards from the wreck. As he worked his eyes chanced to fall on footprints in the dung-mixed earth—Camden's footprints, leading away beyond the little ring of light. And beside them, taking off from the landing-place of that prodigious leap, he discerned the trail of the stallion. After a moment he got down on his knees where the earth was softest, holding the lantern so that its light fell full.

He gave over his fence-building. Returning to the house his gait was no longer that of the roamer; his face, caught by the

periodic flare of the swinging lantern, was the face of another man. In its expression there was a kind of fright and a kind of calculating eagerness. He looked at the clock on the kitchen shelf, shook it, and read it again. He went to the telephone and fumbled at the receiver. He waited till his hand quit shaking, then removed it from the hook.

"Listen, Darred," he said, when he had got the farmer at last, "get White and whatever others you can and come over first thing it's light. Come a-riding and bring your gun. No, Cam ain't back."

He heard Blossom calling. Outside her door he passed one hand down over his face, as he might have passed a wash-rag, to wipe off what was there. Then he went in.

"What's the matter with Blossie? Can't sleep?"

"No, I can't sleep. Can't think. Can't sleep. Oh, Frankie!" He sat down beside the bed.

"Oh, Frankie, Frankie, *hold my hand!*"

She looked almost homely, her face bleached out and her hair a mess on the pillow. But she would get over that. And the short sleeve of the nightgown on the arm he held was edged with pretty lace.

"Got your watch here?" he asked. She gave it to him from under the pillow. This too he shook as if he couldn't believe it was going.

Pretty Blossom Beck. Here for a wonder he sat in her bedroom and held her hand. One brother was dead and the other was on the mountain.

But little by little, as he sat and dreamed so, nightmare crept over his brain. He had to arouse and shake himself. He had to set his thoughts resolutely in other roads. . . . Perhaps there would be even the smithy. The smithy, the store, the farm. Complete. The farm, the farmhouse, the room in the farmhouse, the bed in the room, the wife in the bed. Complete beyond belief. If . . . Worth dodging horror for. If . . .

"Frank, has Cam come back?"

"Cam? Don't you worry about Cam. . . . Where's that watch again? . . .

Far from rounding up their quarry in the early hours after dawn, it took the riders, five of them, till almost noon simply to make certain that he wasn't to be found—not in any of the pas-

tures. Then when they discovered the hole in the fence far up in the woods beyond the crest where Blue Murder had led the mares in a break for the open country of hills and ravines to the south, they were only at the beginning.

The farmers had left their work undone at home and, as the afternoon lengthened and with it the shadows in the hollow places, they began to eye one another behind their leader's back. Yet they couldn't say it; there was something in the storekeeper's air to-day, something zealous and pitiless and fanatical, that shut them up and pulled them plodding on.

Frank did the trailing. Hopeless of getting anywhere before sundown in that unkempt wilderness of a hundred square miles of scrub, his companions slouched in their saddles and rode more and more mechanically, knee to knee, and it was he who made the casts to recover the lost trail and, dismounting to read the dust, cried back, "He's still with 'em," and with gestures of imperious excitement beckoned them on.

"Which you mean?" Darred asked him once. "Cam, or the horse?"

Frank wheeled his beast and spurred back at the speaker. It was extraordinary. "You don't know what you're talking about!" he cried, with a causelessness and a disordered vehemence which set them first staring, then speculating. "Come on, you dumbheads; don't talk—*ride!*"

By the following day, when it was being told in all the farmhouses, the story might vary in details and more and more as the tellings multiplied, but in its fundamentals it remained the same. In one thing they certainly all agreed: they used the same expression—"It was like Frank was drove. Drove in a race against something, and no sparing the whip."

They were a good six miles to the south of the fence. Already the road back home would have to be followed three parts in the dark.

Darred was the spokesman. "Frank, I'm going to call it a day."

The others reined up with him but the man ahead rode on. He didn't seem to hear. Darred lifted his voice. "Come on, call it a day, Frank. To-morrow, maybe. But you see we've run it out and they're not here."

"Wait," said Frank over his shoulder, still riding on into the pocket.

White's mount—a mare—laid back her ears, shied, and stood trembling. After a moment she whinnied.

It was as if she had whinnied for a dozen. A crashing in the woods above them to the left and the avalanche came—downstreaming, erupting, wheeling, wheeling away with volleying snorts, a dark rout.

Darred, reining his horse, began to shout, "Here they go this way, Frank!" But Frank was yelling, "Up here, boys! This way, quick!"

It was the same note, excited, feverish, disordered, breaking like a child's. When they neared him they saw he was off his horse, rifle in hand, and down on his knees to study the ground where the woods began. By the time they reached his animal the impetuous fellow had started up into the cover, his voice trailing, "Come on; spread out and come on!"

One of the farmers got down. When he saw the other three keeping their saddles he swung up again.

White spoke this time. "Be darned if I do!" He lifted a protesting hail, "Come back here, Frank! You're crazy! It's getting dark!"

It was Frank's own fault. They told him plainly to come back and he wouldn't listen.

For a while they could hear his crackle in the mounting underbrush. Then that stopped, whether he had gone too far for their ears or whether he had come to a halt to give his own ears a chance. . . . Once, off to his right, a little higher up under the low ceiling of the trees that darkened moment by moment with the rush of night, they heard another movement, another restlessness of leaves and stones. Then that was still, and everything was still.

Darred ran a sleeve over his face and swung down. "God alive, boys!"

It was the silence. All agreed there—the silence and the deepening dusk.

The first they heard was the shot. No voice. Just the one report. Then after five breaths of another silence a crashing of growth, a charge in the darkness under the withered scrub, continuous and diminishing.

They shouted, "Frank!" No answer. They called, *"Frank Bluedge!"*

Now, since they had to, they did. Keeping contact by word,

and guided partly by directional memory (and mostly in the end by luck), after a time they found the storekeeper in a brake of ferns, lying across his gun.

They got him down to the open, watching behind them all the while. Only then, by the flares of successive matches, under the noses of the snorting horses, did they look for the damage done.

They remembered the stillness and the gloom; it must have been quite black in there. The attack had come from behind —equine and pantherine at once, and planned and cunning. A deliberate lunge with a forefoot again: the shoe which had crushed the backbone between the shoulder blades was a fore-shoe; that much they saw by the match flares in the red wreck.

They took no longer getting home than they had to, but it was longer than they would have wished. With Frank across his own saddle, walking their horses and with one or another ahead to pick the road (it was going to rain, and even the stars were lost), they made no more than a creeping speed.

None of them had much to say on the journey. Finding the break in the boundary fence and feeling through the last of the woods, the lights of their farms began to show in the pool of blackness below, and Darred uttered a part of what had lain in the minds of them all during the return:

"Well, that leaves Cam."

None followed it up. None cared to go any closer than he was to the real question. Something new, alien, menacing and pitiless had come into the valley of their lives with that beast they had never really seen; they felt its oppression, every one, and kept the real question back in their minds: *"Does* it leave Cam?"

It answered itself. Camden was at home when they got there.

He had come in a little before them, empty-handed. Empty-headed too. When Blossom, who had waited all day, part of the time with neighbor women who had come in and part of the time alone to the point of going mad—when she saw him coming down the pasture, his feet stumbling and his shoulders dejected, her first feeling was relief. Her first words, however, were, "Did you get him, Cam?" And all he would answer was, "Gi'me something to eat, can't you? Gi'me a few hours' sleep, can't you? Then wait!"

He looked as if he would need more than a few hours' sleep.

Propped on his elbows over his plate, it seemed as though his eyes would close before his mouth would open.

His skin was scored by thorns and his shirt was in ribbons under the straps of his iron-sagged apron; but it was not by these marks that his twenty-odd hours showed: it was by his face. While yet his eyes were open and his wits still half awake, his face surrendered. The flesh relaxed into lines of stupor, a putty-formed, putty-colored mask of sleep.

Once he let himself be aroused. This was when, to an abstracted query as to Frank's whereabouts, Blossom told him Frank had been out with four others since dawn. He heaved clear of the table and opened his eyes at her, showing the red around the rims.

He spoke with the thick tongue of a drunkard. "If anybody but me lays hand on that stallion I'll kill him. I'll wring his neck."

Then he relapsed into his stupidity, and not even the arrival of the party bringing his brother's body seemed able to shake him so far clear of it again.

At first, when they had laid Frank on the floor where on the night before they had laid Jim, he seemed hardly to comprehend.

"What's wrong with Frank?"

"Some more of Jim's 'expiriment'."

"Frank see him? He's scared, Frank is. Look at his face there."

"He's dead, Cam."

"Dead, you say? Frank dead? Dead of fright; is that it?"

Even when, rolling the body over they showed him what was what, he appeared incapable of comprehension, of amazement, of passion, or of any added grief. He looked at them all with a kind of befuddled protest. Returning to his chair and his plate, he grumbled, "Le'me eat first, can't you? Can't you gi'me a little time to sleep?"

"Well, you wouldn't do much to-night anyway, I guess."

At White's words Blossom opened her mouth for the first time.

"No, nothing to-night, Cam. Cam! *Camden!* Say! Promise!

"And then to-morrow, Cam, what we'll do is to get every last man in the valley, and we'll go at this right. We'll lay hand on that devil—"

Camden swallowed his mouthful of cold steak with difficulty.

His obsession touched, he showed them the rims of his eyes again.

"You do and I'll wring your necks. The man that touches that animal before I do gets his neck wrang. That's all you need to remember."

"Yes, yes—no—that is—" Poor Blossom. "Yes, Mr. White, thanks; no, Cam's not going out to-night. . . . No, Cam, nobody's going to interfere—nor nothing. Don't you worry there. . . ."

Again poor Blossom! Disaster piled too swiftly on disaster; no discipline but instinct left. Caught in fire and flood and earthquake and not knowing what to come, and no creed but "save him who can!"—by hook or crook of wile or smile. With the valley of her life emptied out, and its emptiness repeopled monstrously and pressing down black on the roof under which (now that Frank was gone to the ice-house too and the farmers back home) one brother was left of three—she would tread softly, she would talk or she would be dumb, as her sidelong glimpses of the awake-asleep man's face above the table told her was the instant's need; or if he would eat, she would magic out of nothing something, anything; or if he would sleep, he could sleep, so long as he slept in that house where she could know he was sleeping.

Only one thing. If she could touch him. If she could touch and cling.

Lightning filled the windows. After a moment the thunder came avalanching down the pasture and brought up against the clapboards of the house. At this she was behind his chair. She put out a hand. She touched his shoulder. The shoulder was bare, the shirt ripped away; it was caked with sweat and with the blackening smears of scratches, but for all its exhaustion and dirt it was flesh alive—a living man to touch.

Camden blundered up. "What the hell!" He started off two steps and wheeled on her. "Why don't you get off to bed, for Goll sake!"

"Yes, Cam, yes—right off, yes."

"Well, *I'm* going, I can tell you. For Goll sake, I need some sleep!"

"Yes, that's right, yes, Cam, good-night, Cam—only—only you promise—promise you won't go out—nowheres."

"Go *out?* Not likely I won't! Not *likely!* Get along."

It took her no time to get along then—quick and quiet as a mouse.

Camden lingered to stand at one of the windows where the lightning came again, throwing the black barns and paddocks at him from the white sweep of the pastures crowned by woods.

As it had taken her no time to go, it took Blossom no time to undress and get in bed. When Camden was on his way to his room he heard her calling, "Cam! Just a second, Cam!"

In the dark outside her door he drew one hand down over his face, wiping off whatever might be there. Then he entered.

"Yes? What?"

"Cam, set by me a minute, won't you? And Cam, oh, Cam, hold my hand."

As he slouched down, his fist inclosing her fingers, thoughts awakened and ran and fastened on things. They fastened, tentatively at first, upon the farm. Jim gone. Frank gone. The smithy, the store, and the farm. The whole of Mill Crossing. The trinity. The three in one. . . .

"Tight, Cam, for pity's sake! Hold it tight!"

His eyes, falling to his fist, strayed up along the arm it held. The sleeve, rumpled near the shoulder, was trimmed with pretty lace. . . .

"Tighter, Cam!"

A box of apples. That memory hidden away in the cellar of his mind. Hidden away, clamped down in the dark, till the noxious vapors, the murderous vapors of its rotting had filled the shut-up house he was. . . . A box of red apples for the apple-grower's girl . . . the girl who sniggered and ran away from him to laugh at him. . . .

And here, by the unfolding of a devious destiny, he sat in that girl's bedroom, holding that girl's hand. Jim who had got her, Frank who had wanted her lay side by side out there in the ice-house under the lightning. While he, the "dumb one"—the last to be thought of with anything but amusement and the last to be feared—his big hot fist inclosing her imprecating hand now, and his eyes on the pretty lace at her shoulder— He jumped up with a gulp and a clatter of iron.

"What the—" He flung her hand away. "What the—hell!" He swallowed. "Damn you, Blossie Beck!" He stared at her with repugnance and mortal fright. "Why, you—you—you—"

He moderated his voice with an effort, wiping his brow, "Good-night. You must excuse me, Blossie; I wasn't meaning—I mean—I hope you sleep good. *I* shall. . . . Good-night!"

In his own brain was the one word "Hurry!"

She lay and listened to his boots going along the hall and heard the closing of his door. She ought to have put out the lamp. But even with the shades drawn, the lightning around the edges of the window unnerved her; in the dark alone it would have been more than she could bear.

She lay so till she felt herself nearing exhaustion from the sustained rigidity of her limbs. Rain came and with the rain, wind. Around the eaves it neighed like wild stallions; down the chimneys it moaned like men.

Slipping out of bed and pulling on a bathrobe she ran from her room, bare-footed, and along the hall to Camden's door. "Cam!" she called. "Oh, Cam!" she begged. "Please, please!"

And now he wouldn't answer her.

New lightning, diffused through all the sky by the blown rain, ran at her along the corridor. She pushed the door open. The lamp was burning on the bureau but the room was empty and the bed untouched.

Taking the lamp she skittered down to the kitchen. No one there. . . .

"Hurry!"

Camden had reached the woods when the rain came. Lighting the lantern he had brought, he made his way on to the boundary fence. There, about a mile to the east of the path the others had taken that day, he pulled the rails down and tumbled the stones together in a pile. Then he proceeded another hundred yards, holding the lantern high and peering through the streaming crystals of the rain.

Blue Murder was there. Neither the chain nor the sapling had given way. The lantern and, better than the lantern, a globe of lightning, showed the tethered stallion glistening and quivering, his eyes all whites at the man's approach.

"Gentle, boy; steady, boy!" Talking all the while in the way he had with horses, Camden put a hand on the taut chain and bore with a gradually progressive weight, bringing the dark head nearer. "Steady, boy; gentle there, damn you; gentle!"

Was he afraid of horses? Who was it said he was afraid of horses?

The beast's head was against the man's chest, held there by an arm thrown over the bowed neck. As he smoothed the forehead and fingered the nose with false caresses, Camden's "horse talk" ran on—the cadence one thing, the words another.

"Steady, Goll damn you; you're going to get yours. Cheer up, cheer up, the worst is yet to come. Come now! Come easy! Come along!"

When he had unloosed the chain, he felt for and found with his free hand his hammer hidden behind the tree. Throwing the lantern into the brush, where it flared for an instant before dying, he led the stallion back as far as the break he had made in the fence. Taking a turn with the chain around the animal's nose, like an improvised hackamore, he swung from the stone pile to the slippery back. A moment's shying, a sliding caracole of amazement and distrust, a crushing of knees, a lash of the chain-end, and that was all there was to that. Blue Murder had been ridden before. . . .

In the smithy, chambered in the roaring of the falls and the swish and shock of the storm, Camden sang as he pumped his bellows, filling the cave beneath the rafters with red. The air was nothing, the words were mumbo-jumbo, but they swelled his chest. His eyes, cast from time to time at his wheeling prisoner, had lost their look of helplessness and surly distraction.

Scared? He? No, no, no! Now that he wasn't any longer afraid of time, he wasn't afraid of anything on earth.

"Shy, you devil!" He wagged his exalted head. "Whicker, you hellion! Whicker all you want to, stud horse! To-morrow they're going to get you, the numb fools! To-morrow they can have you. *I* got you *to-night!*"

He was more than other men; he was enormous. Fishing an iron shoe from that inseparable apron pocket of his, he thrust it into the coals and blew and blew. He tried it and it was burning red. He tried it again and it was searing white. Taking it out on the anvil he began to beat it, swinging his hammer one-handed, gigantic. So in the crimson light, irradiating iron sparks, he was at his greatest. Pounding, pounding. A man in the dark of night with a hammer about him can do wonders; with

a horseshoe about him he can cover up a sin. And if the dark of night in a paddock won't hold it, then the dark of undergrowth on a mountainside will. . . .

Pounding, pounding; thinking, thinking, in a great halo of hot stars. Feeding his hungry, his insatiable muscles.

"Steady now, you blue bastard! Steady, boy!"

What he did not realize in his feverish exaltation was that his muscles were not insatiable. In the thirty-odd hours past they had had a feast spread before them and they had had their fill. . . . More than their fill.

As with the scorching iron in his tongs he approached the stallion, he had to step over the nail-box he had stepped over five thousand times in the routine of every day.

A box of apples, eh? Apples to snigger at, eh? But whose girl are you now? . . . Scared, eh?

His foot was heavier of a sudden than it should have been. This five thousand and first time, by the drag of the tenth of an inch, the heel caught the lip of the nail-box.

He tried to save himself from stumbling. At the same time, instinctively, he held the iron flame in his tongs away.

There was a scream out of a horse's throat; a whiff of hair and burnt flesh.

There was a lash of something in the red shadows. There was another sound and another wisp of stench. . . .

When, guided by the stallion's whinnying, they found the smith next day, they saw by the cant of his head that his neck was broken, and they perceived that he too had on him the mark of a shoe. It lay up one side of his throat and the broad of a cheek. It wasn't blue this time, however—it was red. It took them some instants in the sunshine pouring through the wide door to comprehend this phenomenon. It wasn't sunk in by a blow this time; it was burned in, a brand.

Darred called them to look at the stallion, chained behind the forge.

"Almighty God!" The words sounded funny in his mouth. They sounded the funnier in that they were the same ones the blundering smith had uttered when, staring uphill from his clever wreckage of the paddock fence, he had seen the mares striking sparks from the stones where the stallion struck none. And he, of all men, a smith!

"Almighty God!" called Darred. "What you make of these here feet?"

One fore-hoof was freshly pared for shoeing; the other three hoofs were as virgin as any yearling's on the plains. Blue Murder had never been shod. . . .

A TALE OF NEGATIVE GRAVITY[1]

By FRANK STOCKTON

MY wife and I were staying at a small town in northern Italy; and on a certain pleasant afternoon in spring we had taken a walk of six or seven miles to see the sun set behind some low mountains to the west of the town. Most of our walk had been along a hard, smooth highway, and then we turned into a series of narrower roads, sometimes bordered by walls, and sometimes by light fences of reed or cane. Nearing the mountain, to a low spur of which we intended to ascend, we easily scaled a wall about four feet high, and found ourselves upon pasture-land, which led, sometimes by gradual ascents, and sometimes by bits of rough climbing, to the spot we wished to reach. We were afraid we were a little late, and therefore hurried on, running up the grassy hills, and bounding briskly over the rough and rocky places. I carried a knapsack strapped firmly to my shoulders, and under my wife's arm was a large, soft basket of a kind much used by tourists. Her arm was passed through the handles and around the bottom of the basket, which she pressed closely to her side. This was the way she always carried it. The basket contained two bottles of wine, one sweet for my wife, and another a little acid for myself. Sweet wines give me a headache.

When we reached the grassy bluff, well known thereabouts to lovers of sunset views, I stepped immediately to the edge to gaze upon the scene, but my wife sat down to take a sip of wine, for she was very thirsty; and then, leaving her basket, she came to my side. The scene was indeed one of great beauty. Beneath us stretched a wide valley of many shades of green, with a little river running through it, and red-tiled houses here and there. Beyond rose a range of mountains, pink, pale green, and purple where their tips caught the reflection of the setting sun, and of a rich gray-green in shadows. Beyond all was the blue Italian sky, illumined by an especially fine sunset.

[1] From *A Chosen Few,* by Frank Stockton; copyright by Charles Scribner's Sons. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

My wife and I are Americans, and at the time of this story were middle-aged people and very fond of seeing in each other's company whatever there was of interest or beauty around us. We had a son about twenty-two years old, of whom we were also very fond; but he was not with us, being at that time a student in Germany. Although we had good health, we were not very robust people, and, under ordinary circumstances, not much given to long country tramps. I was of medium size, without much muscular development, while my wife was quite stout, and growing stouter.

The reader may, perhaps, be somewhat surprised that a middle-aged couple, not very strong, or very good walkers, the lady loaded with a basket containing two bottles of wine and a metal drinking-cup, and the gentleman carrying a heavy knapsack, filled with all sorts of odds and ends, strapped to his shoulders, should set off on a seven-mile walk, jump over a wall, run up a hillside, and yet feel in very good trim to enjoy a sunset view. This peculiar state of things I will proceed to explain.

I had been a professional man, but some years before had retired upon a very comfortable income. I had always been very fond of scientific pursuits, and now made these the occupation and pleasure of much of my leisure time. Our home was in a small town; and in a corner of my grounds I built a laboratory, where I carried on my work and my experiments. I had long been anxious to discover the means not only of producing, but of retaining and controlling, a natural force, really the same as centrifugal force, but which I called negative gravity. This name I adopted because it indicated better than any other the action of the force in question, as I produced it. Positive gravity attracts everything toward the centre of the earth. Negative gravity, therefore, would be that power which repels everything from the centre of the earth, just as the negative pole of a magnet repels the needle, while the positive pole attracts it. My object was, in fact, to store centrifugal force and to render it constant, controllable, and available for use. The advantages of such a discovery could scarcely be described. In a word, it would lighten the burdens of the world.

I will not touch upon the labors and disappointments of several years. It is enough to say that at last I discovered a method of producing, storing, and controlling negative gravity.

The mechanism of my invention was rather complicated, but

the method of operating it was very simple. A strong metallic case, about eight inches long, and half as wide, contained the machinery for producing the force; and this was put into action by means of the pressure of a screw worked from the outside. As soon as this pressure was produced, negative gravity began to be evolved and stored, and the greater the pressure the greater the force. As the screw was moved outward, and the pressure diminished, the force decreased, and when the screw was withdrawn to its fullest extent, the action of negative gravity entirely ceased. Thus this force could be produced or dissipated at will to such degrees as might be desired, and its action, so long as the requisite pressure was maintained, was constant.

When this little apparatus worked to my satisfaction I called my wife into my laboratory and explained to her my invention and its value. She had known that I had been at work with an important object, but I had never told her what it was. I had said that if I succeeded I would tell her all, but if I failed she need not be troubled with the matter at all. Being a very sensible woman, this satisfied her perfectly. Now I explained everything to her—the construction of the machine, and the wonderful uses to which this invention could be applied. I told her that it could diminish, or entirely dissipate, the weight of objects of any kind. A heavily loaded wagon, with two of these instruments fastened to its sides, and each screwed to a proper force, would be so lifted and supported that it would press upon the ground as lightly as an empty cart, and a small horse could draw it with ease. A bale of cotton, with one of these machines attached, could be handled and carried by a boy. A car, with a number of these machines, could be made to rise in the air like a balloon. Everything, in fact, that was heavy could be made light; and as a great part of labor, all over the world, is caused by the attraction of gravitation, so this repellent force, wherever applied, would make weight less and work easier. I told her of many, many ways in which the invention might be used, and would have told her of many more if she had not suddenly burst into tears.

"The world has gained something wonderful," she exclaimed, between her sobs, "but I have lost a husband!"

"What do you mean by that?" I asked, in surprise.

"I haven't minded it so far," she said, "because it gave you something to do, and it pleased you, and it never interfered with

our home pleasures and our home life. But now that is all over. You will never be your own master again. It will succeed, I am sure, and you may make a great deal of money, but we don't need money. What we need is the happiness which we have always had until now. Now there will be companies, and patents, and lawsuits, and experiments, and people calling you a humbug, and other people saying they discovered it long ago, and all sorts of persons coming to see you, and you'll be obliged to go to all sorts of places, and you will be an altered man, and we shall never be happy again. Millions of money will not repay us for the happiness we have lost."

These words of my wife struck me with much force. Before I had called her my mind had begun to be filled and perplexed with ideas of what I ought to do now that the great invention was perfected. Until now the matter had not troubled me at all. Sometimes I had gone backward and sometimes forward, but, on the whole, I had always felt encouraged. I had taken great pleasure in the work, but I had never allowed myself to be too much absorbed by it. But now everything was different. I began to feel that it was due to myself and to my fellow-beings that I should properly put this invention before the world. And how should I set about it? What steps should I take? I must make no mistakes. When the matter should become known hundreds of scientific people might set themselves to work; how could I tell but that they might discover other methods of producing the same effect? I must guard myself against a great many things. I must get patents in all parts of the world. Already, as I have said, my mind began to be troubled and perplexed with these things. A turmoil of this sort did not suit my age or disposition. I could not but agree with my wife that the joys of a quiet and contented life were now about to be broken into.

"My dear," said I, "I believe, with you, that the thing will do us more harm than good. If it were not for depriving the world of the invention I would throw the whole thing to the winds. And yet," I added, regretfully, "I had expected a great deal of personal gratification from the use of this invention."

"Now listen," said my wife, eagerly; "don't you think it would be best to do this: use the thing as much as you please for your own amusement and satisfaction, but let the world wait? It has waited a long time, and let it wait a little longer.

When we are dead let Herbert have the invention. He will then be old enough to judge for himself whether it will be better to take advantage of it for his own profit, or simply to give it to the public for nothing. It would be cheating him if we were to do the latter, but it would also be doing him a great wrong if we were, at his age, to load him with such a heavy responsibility. Besides, if he took it up, you could not help going into it, too."

I took my wife's advice. I wrote a careful and complete account of the invention, and, sealing it up, I gave it to my lawyers to be handed to my son after my death. If he died first, I would make other arrangements. Then I determined to get all the good and fun out of the thing that was possible without telling any one anything about it. Even Herbert, who was away from home, was not to be told of the invention.

The first thing I did was to buy a strong leathern knapsack, and inside of this I fastened my little machine, with a screw so arranged that it could be worked from the outside. Strapping this firmly to my shoulders, my wife gently turned the screw at the back until the upward tendency of the knapsack began to lift and sustain me. When I felt myself so gently supported and upheld that I seemed to weigh about thirty or forty pounds, I would set out for a walk. The knapsack did not raise me from the ground, but it gave me a very buoyant step. It was no labor at all to walk; it was a delight, an ecstasy. With the strength of a man and the weight of a child, I gayly strode along. The first day I walked half a dozen miles at a very brisk pace, and came back without feeling in the least degree tired. These walks now became one of the greatest joys of my life. When nobody was looking, I would bound over a fence, sometimes just touching it with one hand, and sometimes not touching it at all. I delighted in rough places. I sprang over streams. I jumped and I ran. I felt like Mercury himself.

I now set about making another machine, so that my wife could accompany me in my walks; but when it was finished she positively refused to use it. "I can't wear a knapsack," she said, "and there is no other good way of fastening it to me. Besides, everybody about here knows I am no walker, and it would only set them talking."

I occasionally made use of this second machine, but I will give only one instance of its application. Some repairs were

needed to the foundation-walls of my barn, and a two-horse wagon, loaded with building-stone, had been brought into my yard and left there. In the evening, when the men had gone away, I took my two machines and fastened them, with strong chains, one on each side of the loaded wagon. Then, gradually turning the screws, the wagon was so lifted that its weight became very greatly diminished. We had an old donkey which used to belong to Herbert, and which was now occasionally used with a small cart to bring packages from the station. I went into the barn and put the harness on the little fellow, and, bringing him out to the wagon, I attached him to it. In this position he looked very funny with a long pole sticking out in front of him and the great wagon behind him. When all was ready I touched him up; and, to my great delight, he moved off with the two-horse load of stone as easily as if he were drawing his own cart. I led him out into the public road, along which he proceeded without difficulty. He was an opinionated little beast, and sometimes stopped, not liking the peculiar manner in which he was harnessed; but a touch of the switch made him move on, and I soon turned him and brought the wagon back into the yard. This determined the success of my invention in one of its most important uses, and with a satisfied heart I put the donkey into the stable and went into the house.

Our trip to Europe was made a few months after this, and was mainly on our son Herbert's account. He, poor fellow, was in great trouble, and so, therefore, were we. He had become engaged, with our full consent, to a young lady in our town, the daughter of a gentleman whom we esteemed very highly. Herbert was young to be engaged to be married, but as we felt that he would never find a girl to make him so good a wife, we were entirely satisfied, especially as it was agreed on all hands that the marriage was not to take place for some time. It seemed to us that, in marrying Janet Gilbert, Herbert would secure for himself, in the very beginning of his career, the most important element of a happy life. But suddenly, without any reason that seemed to us justifiable, Mr. Gilbert, the only surviving parent of Janet, broke off the match; and he and his daughter soon after left the town for a trip to the West.

This blow nearly broke poor Herbert's heart. He gave up his professional studies and came home to us, and for a time we thought he would be seriously ill. Then we took him to Europe,

and after a Continental tour of a month or two we left him, at his own request, in Göttingen, where he thought it would do him good to go to work again. Then we went down to the little town in Italy where my story first finds us. My wife had suffered much in mind and body on her son's account, and for this reason I was anxious that she should take outdoor exercise, and enjoy as much as possible the bracing air of the country. I had brought with me both my little machines. One was still in my knapsack, and the other I had fastened to the inside of an enormous family trunk. As one is obliged to pay for nearly every pound of his baggage on the Continent, this saved me a great deal of money. Everything heavy was packed into this great trunk—books, papers, the bronze, iron, and marble relics we had picked up, and all the articles that usually weigh down a tourist's baggage. I screwed up the negative-gravity apparatus until the trunk could be handled with great ease by an ordinary porter. I could have made it weigh nothing at all, but this, of course, I did not wish to do. The lightness of my baggage, however, had occasioned some comment, and I had overheard remarks which were not altogether complimentary about people traveling around with empty trunks; but this only amused me.

Desirous that my wife should have the advantage of negative gravity while taking our walks, I had removed the machine from the trunk and fastened it inside of the basket, which she could carry under her arm. This assisted her wonderfully. When one arm was tired she put the basket under the other, and thus, with one hand on my arm, she could easily keep up with the free and buoyant steps my knapsack enabled me to take. She did not object to long tramps here, because nobody knew that she was not a walker, and she always carried some wine or other refreshment in the basket, not only because it was pleasant to have it with us, but because it seemed ridiculous to go about carrying an empty basket.

There were English-speaking people stopping at the hotel where we were, but they seemed more fond of driving than walking, and none of them offered to accompany us on our rambles, for which we were very glad. There was one man there, however, who was a great walker. He was an Englishman, a member of an Alpine Club, and generally went about dressed in a knickerbocker suit, with gay woollen stockings covering an enormous pair of

calves. One evening this gentleman was talking to me and some others about the ascent of the Matterhorn, and I took occasion to deliver in pretty strong language my opinion upon such exploits. I declared them to be useless, foolhardy, and, if the climber had any one who loved him, wicked.

"Even if the weather should permit a view," I said, "what is that compared to the terrible risk to life? Under certain circumstances," I added (thinking of a kind of waistcoat I had some idea of making, which, set about with little negative-gravity machines, all connected with a conveniently handled screw, would enable the wearer at times to dispense with his weight altogether), "such ascents might be divested of danger, and be quite admissible; but ordinarily they should be frowned upon by the intelligent public."

The Alpine Club man looked at me, especially regarding my somewhat slight figure and thinnish legs.

"It's all very well for you to talk that way," he said, "because it is easy to see that you are not up to that sort of thing."

"In conversations of this kind," I replied, "I never make personal allusions; but since you have chosen to do so, I feel inclined to invite you to walk with me to-morrow to the top of the mountain to the north of this town."

"I'll do it," he said, "at any time you choose to name." And as I left the room soon afterward I heard him laugh.

The next afternoon, about two o'clock, the Alpine Club man and myself set out for the mountain.

"What have you got in your knapsack?" he said.

"A hammer to use if I come across geological specimens, a field-glass, a flask of wine, and some other things."

"I wouldn't carry any weight, if I were you," he said.

"Oh, I don't mind it," I answered, and off we started.

The mountain to which we were bound was about two miles from the town. Its nearest side was steep, and in places almost precipitous, but it sloped away more gradually toward the north, and up that side of a road led by devious windings to a village near the summit. It was not a very high mountain, but it would do for an afternoon's climb.

"I suppose you want to go up by the road," said my companion.

"Oh no," I answered, "we won't go so far around as that. There is a path up this side, along which I have seen men driving their goats. I prefer to take that."

"All right, if you say so," he answered, with a smile; "but you'll find it pretty tough."

After a time he remarked:

"I wouldn't walk so fast, if I were you."

"Oh, I like to step along briskly," I said. And briskly on we went.

My wife had screwed up the machine in the knapsack more than usual, and walking seemed scarcely any effort at all. I carried a long alpenstock, and when we reached the mountain and began the ascent, I found that with the help of this and my knapsack I could go uphill at a wonderful rate. My companion had taken the lead, so as to show me how to climb. Making a *détour* over some rocks, I quickly passed him and went ahead. After that it was impossible for him to keep up with me. I ran up steep places, I cut off the windings of the path by lightly clambering over rocks, and even when I followed the beaten track my step was as rapid as if I had been walking on level ground.

"Look here!" shouted the Alpine Club man from below, "you'll kill yourself if you go at that rate! That's no way to climb mountains."

"It's my way!" I cried. And on I skipped.

Twenty minutes after I arrived at the summit my companion joined me, puffing and wiping his red face with his handkerchief.

"Confound it!" he cried, "I never came up a mountain so fast in my life."

"You need not have hurried," I said, coolly.

"I was afraid something would happen to you," he growled, "and I wanted to stop you. I never saw a person climb in such an utterly absurd way."

"I don't see why you should call it absurd," I said, smiling with an air of superiority. "I arrived here in a perfectly comfortable condition, neither heated nor wearied."

He made no answer, but walked off to a little distance, fanning himself with his hat and growling words which I did not catch. After a time I proposed to descend.

"You must be careful as you go down," he said. "It is much more dangerous to go down steep places than to climb up."

"I am always prudent," I answered, and started in advance. I found the descent of the mountain much more pleasant than the ascent. It was positively exhilarating. I jumped from

rocks and bluffs eight and ten feet in height, and touched the ground as gently as if I had stepped down but two feet. I ran down steep paths, and, with the aid of my alpenstock, stopped myself in an instant. I was careful to avoid dangerous places, but the runs and jumps I made were such as no man had ever made before upon that mountain-side. Once only I heard my companion's voice.

"You'll break your —— neck!" he yelled.

"Never fear!" I called back, and soon left him far above.

When I reached the bottom I would have waited for him, but my activity had warmed me up, and as a cool evening breeze was beginning to blow I thought it better not to stop and take cold. Half an hour after my arrival at the hotel I came down to the court, cool, fresh, and dressed for dinner, and just in time to meet the Alpine man as he entered, hot, dusty, and growling.

"Excuse me for not waiting for you," I said; but without stopping to hear my reason, he muttered something about waiting in a place where no one would care to stay, and passed into the house.

There was no doubt that what I had done gratified my pique and tickled my vanity.

"I think now," I said, when I related the matter to my wife, "that he will scarcely say that I am not up to that sort of thing."

"I am not sure," she answered, "that it was exactly fair. He did not know how you were assisted."

"It was fair enough," I said. "He is enabled to climb well by the inherited vigor of his constitution and by his training. He did not tell me what methods of exercise he used to get those great muscles upon his legs. I am enabled to climb by the exercise of my intellect. My method is my business and his method is his business. It is all perfectly fair."

Still she persisted:

"He *thought* that you climbed with your legs, and not with your head."

And now, after this long digression, necessary to explain how a middle-aged couple of slight pedestrian ability, and loaded with a heavy knapsack and basket, should have started out on a rough walk and climb, fourteen miles in all, we will return to ourselves, standing on the little bluff and gazing out upon the sunset view. When the sky began to fade a little we turned from it and prepared to go back to the town.

"Where is the basket?" I said.

"I left it right here," answered my wife. "I unscrewed the machine and it lay perfectly flat."

"Did you afterward take out the bottles?" I asked, seeing them lying on the grass.

"Yes, I believe I did. I had to take out yours in order to get at mine."

"Then," said I, after looking all about the grassy patch on which we stood, "I am afraid you did not entirely unscrew the instrument, and that when the weight of the bottles was removed the basket gently rose into the air."

"It may be so," she said, lugubriously. "The basket was behind me as I drank my wine."

"I believe that is just what has happened," I said. "Look up there! I vow that is our basket!"

I pulled out my field-glass and directed it at a little speck high above our heads. It was the basket floating high in the air. I gave the glass to my wife to look, but she did not want to use it.

"What shall I do?" she cried. "I can't walk home without that basket. It's perfectly dreadful!" And she looked as if she was going to cry.

"Do not distress yourself," I said, although I was a good deal disturbed myself. "We shall get home very well. You shall put your hand on my shoulder, while I put my arm around you. Then you can screw up my machine a good deal higher, and it will support us both. In this way I am sure that we shall get on very well."

We carried out this plan, and managed to walk on with moderate comfort. To be sure, with the knapsack pulling me upward, and the weight of my wife pulling me down, the straps hurt me somewhat, which they had not done before. We did not spring lightly over the wall into the road, but, still clinging to each other, we clambered awkwardly over it. The road for the most part declined gently toward the town, and with moderate ease we made our way along it. But we walked much more slowly than we had done before, and it was quite dark when we reached our hotel. If it had not been for the light inside the court it would have been difficult for us to find it. A travelling-carriage was standing before the entrance, and against the light. It was necessary to pass around it, and my wife went first. I attempted

to follow her, but, strange to say, there was nothing under my feet. I stepped vigorously, but only wagged my legs in the air. To my horror I found that I was rising in the air! I soon saw, by the light below me, that I was some fifteen feet from the ground. The carriage drove away, and in the darkness I was not noticed. Of course I knew what had happened. The instrument in my knapsack had been screwed up to such an intensity, in order to support both myself and my wife, that when her weight was removed the force of the negative gravity was sufficient to raise me from the ground. But I was glad to find that when I had risen to the height I have mentioned I did not go up any higher, but hung in the air, about on a level with the second tier of windows of the hotel.

I now began to try to reach the screw in my knapsack in order to reduce the force of the negative gravity; but, do what I would, I could not get my hand to it. The machine in the knapsack had been placed so as to support me in a well-balanced and comfortable way; and in doing this it had been impossible to set the screw so that I could reach it. But in a temporary arrangement of the kind this had not been considered necessary, as my wife always turned the screw for me until sufficient lifting power had been attained. I had intended, as I have said before, to construct a negative-gravity waistcoat, in which the screw should be in front, and entirely under the wearer's control; but this was a thing of the future.

When I found that I could not turn the screw I began to be much alarmed. Here I was, dangling in the air, without any means of reaching the ground. I could not expect my wife to return to look for me, as she would naturally suppose I had stopped to speak to some one. I thought of loosening myself from the knapsack, but this would not do, for I should fall heavily, and either kill myself or break some of my bones. I did not dare to call for assistance, for if any of the simple-minded inhabitants of the town had discovered me floating in the air they would have taken me for a demon, and would probably have shot at me. A moderate breeze was blowing, and it wafted me gently down the street. If it had blown me against a tree I would have seized it, and have endeavored, so to speak, to climb down it; but there were no trees. There was a dim street-lamp here and there, but reflectors above them threw their light upon the pavement, and none up to me. On many accounts

I was glad that the night was so dark, for, much as I desired to get down, I wanted no one to see me in my strange position, which, to any one but myself and wife, would be utterly unaccountable. If I could rise as high as the roofs I might get on one of them, and, tearing off an armful of tiles, so load myself that I would be heavy enough to descend. But I did not rise to the eaves of any of the houses. If there had been a telegraph-pole, or anything of the kind that I could have clung to, I would have taken off the knapsack, and would have endeavored to scramble down as well as I could. But there was nothing I could cling to. Even the water-spouts, if I could have reached the face of the houses, were embedded in the walls. At an open window, near which I was slowly blown, I saw two little boys going to bed by the light of a dim candle. I was dreadfully afraid that they would see me and raise an alarm. I actually came so near to the window that I threw out one foot and pushed against the wall with such force that I went nearly across the street. I thought I caught sight of a frightened look on the face of one of the boys; but of this I am not sure, and I heard no cries. I still floated, dangling, down the street. What was to be done? Should I call out? In that case, if I were not shot or stoned, my strange predicament, and the secret of my invention, would be exposed to the world. If I did not do this, I must either let myself drop and be killed or mangled, or hang there and die. When, during the course of the night, the air became more rarefied, I might rise higher and higher, perhaps to an altitude of one or two hundred feet. It would then be impossible for the people to reach me and get me down, even if they were convinced that I was not a demon. I should then expire, and when the birds of the air had eaten all of me that they could devour, I should forever hang above the unlucky town, a dangling skeleton with a knapsack on its back.

Such thoughts were not reassuring, and I determined that if I could find no means of getting down without assistance, I would call out and run all risks; but so long as I could endure the tension of the straps I would hold out, and hope for a tree or a pole. Perhaps it might rain, and my wet clothes would then become so heavy that I would descend as low as the top of a lamp-post.

As this thought was passing through my mind I saw a spark of light upon the street approaching me. I rightly imagined that

it came from a tobacco-pipe, and presently I heard a voice. It was that of the Alpine Club man. Of all people in the world I did not want him to discover me, and I hung as motionless as possible. The man was speaking to another person who was walking with him.

"He is crazy beyond a doubt," said the Alpine man. "Nobody but a maniac could have gone up and down that mountain as he did! He hasn't any muscles, and one need only look at him to know that he couldn't do any climbing in a natural way. It is only the excitement of insanity that gives him strength."

The two now stopped almost under me, and the speaker continued:

"Such things are very common with maniacs. At times they acquire an unnatural strength which is perfectly wonderful. I have seen a little fellow struggle and fight so that four strong men could not hold him."

Then the other person spoke.

"I am afraid what you say is too true," he remarked. "Indeed, I have known it for some time."

At these words my breath almost stopped. It was the voice of Mr. Gilbert, my townsman, and the father of Janet. It must have been he who arrived in the travelling-carriage. He was acquainted with the Alpine Club man, and they were talking of me. Proper or improper, I listened with all my ears.

"It is a very sad case," Mr. Gilbert continued. "My daughter was engaged to marry his son, but I broke off the match. I could not have her marry the son of a lunatic, and there could be no doubt of his condition. He has been seen—a man of his age, and the head of a family—to load himself up with a heavy knapsack, which there was no earthly necessity for him to carry, and go skipping along the road for miles, vaulting over fences and jumping over rocks and ditches like a young calf or a colt. I myself saw a most heartrending instance of how a kindly man's nature can be changed by the derangement of his intellect. I was at some distance from his house, but I plainly saw him harness a little donkey which he owns to a large two-horse wagon loaded with stone, and beat and lash the poor little beast until it drew the heavy load some distance along the public road. I would have remonstrated with him on this horrible cruelty, but he had the wagon back in his yard before I could reach him."

"Oh, there can be no doubt of his insanity," said the Alpine

Club man, "and he oughtn't to be allowed to travel about in this way. Some day he will pitch his wife over a precipice just for the fun of seeing her shoot through the air."

"I am sorry he is here," said Mr. Gilbert, "for it would be very painful to meet him. My daughter and I will retire very soon, and go away as early to-morrow morning as possible, so as to avoid seeing him."

And then they walked back to the hotel.

For a few moments I hung, utterly forgetful of my condition, and absorbed in the consideration of these revelations. One idea now filled my mind. Everything must be explained to Mr. Gilbert, even if it should be necessary to have him called to me, and for me to speak to him from the upper air.

Just then I saw something white approaching me along the road. My eyes had become accustomed to the darkness, and I perceived that it was an upturned face. I recognized the hurried gait, the form; it was my wife. As she came near me, I called her name, and in the same breath entreated her not to scream. It must have been an effort for her to restrain herself, but she did it.

"You must help me to get down," I said, "without anybody seeing us."

"What shall I do?" she whispered.

"Try to catch hold of this string."

Taking a piece of twine from my pocket, I lowered one end to her. But it was too short; she could not reach it. I then tied my handkerchief to it, but still it was not long enough.

"I can get more string, or handkerchiefs," she whispered, hurriedly.

"No," I said; "you could not get them up to me. But, leaning against the hotel wall, on this side, in the corner, just inside of the garden gate, are some fishing-poles. I have seen them there every day. You can easily find them in the dark. Go, please, and bring me one of those."

The hotel was not far away, and in a few minutes my wife returned with a fishing-pole. She stood on tiptoe, and reached it high in air; but all she could do was to strike my feet and legs with it. My most frantic exertions did not enable me to get my hands low enough to touch it.

"Wait a minute," she said; and the rod was withdrawn.

I knew what she was doing. There was a hook and line at-

tached to the pole, and with womanly dexterity she was fastening the hook to the extreme end of the rod. Soon she reached up, and gently struck at my legs. After a few attempts the hook caught in my trousers, a little below my right knee. Then there was a slight pull, a long scratch down my leg, and the hook was stopped by the top of my boot. Then came a steady downward pull, and I felt myself descending. Gently and firmly the rod was drawn down; carefully the lower end was kept free from the ground; and in a few moments my ankle was seized with a vigorous grasp. Then some one seemed to climb up me, my feet touched the ground, an arm was thrown around my neck, the hand of another arm was busy at the back of my knapsack, and I soon stood firmly in the road, entirely divested of negative gravity.

"Oh that I should have forgotten," sobbed my wife, "and that I should have dropped your arms and let you go up into the air! At first I thought that you had stopped below, and it was only a little while ago that the truth flashed upon me. Then I rushed out and began looking up for you. I knew that you had wax matches in your pocket, and hoped that you would keep on striking them, so that you would be seen."

"But I did not wish to be seen," I said, as we hurried to the hotel; "and I can never be sufficiently thankful that it was you who found me and brought me down. Do you know that it is Mr. Gilbert and his daughter who have just arrived? I must see him instantly. I will explain it all to you when I come upstairs."

I took off my knapsack and gave it to my wife, who carried it to our room, while I went to look for Mr. Gilbert. Fortunately I found him just as he was about to go up to his chamber. He took my offered hand, but looked at me sadly and gravely.

"Mr. Gilbert," I said, "I must speak to you in private. Let us step into this room. There is no one here."

"My friend," said Mr. Gilbert, "it will be much better to avoid discussing this subject. It is very painful to both of us, and no good can come from talking of it."

"You cannot now comprehend what it is I want to say to you," I replied. "Come in here, and in a few minutes you will be very glad that you listened to me."

My manner was so earnest and impressive that Mr. Gilbert was constrained to follow me, and we went into a small room called

the smoking-room, but in which people seldom smoked, and closed the door. I immediately began my statement. I told my old friend that I had discovered, by means that I need not explain at present, that he had considered me crazy, and that now the most important object of my life was to set myself right in his eyes. I thereupon gave him the whole history of my invention, and explained the reason of the actions that had appeared to him those of a lunatic. I said nothing about the little incident of that evening. That was a mere accident, and I did not care now to speak of it.

Mr. Gilbert listened to me very attentively.

"Your wife is here?" he asked, when I had finished.

"Yes," I said; "and she will corroborate my story in every item, and no one could ever suspect her of being crazy. I will go and bring her to you."

In a few minutes my wife was in the room, had shaken hands with Mr. Gilbert, and had been told of my suspected madness. She turned pale, but smiled.

"He did act like a crazy man," she said, "but I never supposed that anybody would think him one." And tears came into her eyes.

"And now, my dear," said I, "perhaps you will tell Mr. Gilbert how I did all this."

And then she told him the story that I had told.

Mr. Gilbert looked from the one to the other of us with a troubled air.

"Of course I do not doubt either of you, or rather I do not doubt that you believe what you say. All would be right if I could bring myself to credit that such a force as that you speak of can possibly exist."

"That is a matter," said I, "which I can easily prove to you by actual demonstration. If you can wait a short time, until my wife and I have had something to eat—for I am nearly famished, and I am sure she must be—I will set your mind at rest upon that point."

"I will wait here," said Mr. Gilbert, "and smoke a cigar. Don't hurry yourselves. I shall be glad to have some time to think about what you have told me."

When we had finished the dinner, which had been set aside for us, I went upstairs and got my knapsack, and we both joined Mr. Gilbert in the smoking-room. I showed him the little ma-

chine, and explained, very briefly, the principle of its construction. I did not give any practical demonstration of its action, because there were people walking about the corridor who might at any moment come into the room; but, looking out of the window, I saw that the night was much clearer. The wind had dissipated the clouds, and the stars were shining brightly.

"If you will come up the street with me," said I to Mr. Gilbert, "I will show you how this thing works."

"That is just what I want to see," he answered.

"I will go with you," said my wife, throwing a shawl over her head. And we started up the street.

When we were outside the little town I found the starlight was quite sufficient for my purpose. The white roadway, the low walls, and objects about us, could easily be distinguished.

"Now," said I to Mr. Gilbert, "I want to put this knapsack on you, and let you see how it feels, and how it will help you to walk." To this he assented with some eagerness, and I strapped it firmly on him. "I will now turn this screw," said I, "until you shall become lighter and lighter."

"Be very careful not to turn it too much," said my wife, earnestly.

"Oh, you may depend on me for that," said I, turning the screw very gradually.

Mr. Gilbert was a stout man, and I was obliged to give the screw a good many turns.

"There seems to be considerable hoist in it," he said, directly. And then I put my arms around him, and found that I could raise him from the ground.

"Are you lifting me?" he exclaimed, in surprise.

"Yes; I did it with ease," I answered.

"Upon—my—word!" ejaculated Mr. Gilbert.

I then gave the screw a half-turn more, and told him to walk and run. He started off, at first slowly, then he made long strides, then he began to run, and then to skip and jump. It had been many years since Mr. Gilbert had skipped and jumped. No one was in sight, and he was free to gambol as much as he pleased. "Could you give it another turn?" said he, bounding up to me. "I want to try that wall." I put on a little more negative gravity, and he vaulted over a five-foot wall with great ease. In an instant he had leaped back into the road, and in two bounds was at my side. "I came down as light as a cat,"

he said. "There was never anything like it." And away he went up the road, taking steps at least eight feet long, leaving my wife and me laughing heartily at the preternatural agility of our stout friend. In a few minutes he was with us again. "Take it off,' he said. "If I wear it any longer I shall want one myself, and then I shall be taken for a crazy man, and perhaps clapped into an asylum."

"Now," said I, as I turned back the screw before unstrapping the knapsack, "do you understand how I took long walks, and leaped and jumped; how I ran uphill and downhill, and how the little donkey drew the loaded wagon?"

"I understand it all," cried he. "I take back all I ever said or thought about you, my friend."

"And Herbert may marry Janet?" cried my wife.

"*May* marry her!" cried Mr. Gilbert. "Indeed, he *shall* marry her, if I have anything to say about it! My poor girl has been drooping ever since I told her it could not be."

My wife rushed at him, but whether she embraced him or only shook his hands I cannot say; for I had the knapsack in one hand and was rubbing my eyes with the other.

"But, my dear fellow," said Mr. Gilbert, directly, "if you still consider it to your interest to keep your invention a secret, I wish you had never made it. No one having a machine like that can help using it, and it is often quite as bad to be considered a maniac as to be one."

"My friend," I cried, with some excitement, "I have made up my mind on this subject. The little machine in this knapsack, which is the only one I now possess, has been a great pleasure to me. But I now know it has also been of the greatest injury indirectly to me and mine, not to mention some direct inconvenience and danger, which I will speak of another time. The secret lies with us three, and we will keep it. But the invention itself is too full of temptation and danger for any of us."

As I said this I held the knapsack with one hand while I quickly turned the screw with the other. In a few moments it was high above my head, while I with difficulty held it down by the straps. "Look!" I cried. And then I released my hold, and the knapsack shot into the air and disappeared into the upper gloom.

I was about to make a remark, but had no chance, for my wife threw herself upon my bosom, sobbing with joy.

"Oh, I am so glad—so glad," she said. "And you will never make another?"

"Never another!" I answered.

"And now let us hurry in and see Janet," said my wife.

"You don't know how heavy and clumsy I feel," said Mr. Gilbert, striving to keep up with us as we walked back. "If I had worn that thing much longer, I should never have been willing to take it off!"

Janet had retired, but my wife went up to her room.

"I think she has felt it as much as our boy," she said, when she rejoined me. "But I tell you, my dear, I left a very happy girl in that little bedchamber over the garden."

And there were three very happy elderly people talking together until quite late that evening. "I shall write to Herbert to-night," I said, when we separated, "and tell him to meet us all in Geneva. It will do the young man no harm if we interrupt his studies just now."

"You must let me add a postscript to the letter," said Mr. Gilbert, "and I am sure it will require no knapsack with a screw in the back to bring him quickly to us."

And it did not.

There is a wonderful pleasure in tripping over the earth like a winged Mercury, and in feeling one's self relieved of much of that attraction of gravitation which drags us down to earth and gradually makes the movement of our bodies but weariness and labor. But this pleasure is not to be compared, I think, to that given by the buoyancy and lightness of two young and loving hearts, reunited after a separation which they had supposed would last forever.

What became of the basket and the knapsack, or whether they ever met in upper air, I do not know. If they but float away and stay away from ken of mortal man, I shall be satisfied.

And whether or not the world will ever know more of the power of negative gravity depends entirely upon the disposition of my son Herbert, when—after a good many years, I hope—he shall open the packet my lawyers have in keeping.

[Note.—It would be quite useless for any one to interview my wife on this subject, for she has entirely forgotten how my machine was made. And as for Mr. Gilbert, he never knew.]

THE LITTLE GIRL FROM TOWN[1]

By RUTH SUCKOW

I WONDER who that is coming here," Mrs. Sieverson said looking out of the kitchen window.

"Somebody coming?" Mr. Sieverson asked from the sink. "Oh, I guess that's Dave Lindsay, ain't it? He said he'd be out."

"Yes, but he's got someone with him. Oh! I believe it's that little girl from back East somewhere that's visiting them. Leone! Children!"

Mr. Sieverson went outdoors, and then Mrs. Sieverson and, by the time the car stopped, rounding the drive, all four children were on hand from somewhere. Even Marvin and Clyde, the two boys.

"Anybody home?" Mr. Lindsay called out jovially.

"You bet!"

They were all looking at the little girl in the car beside him. They had heard about this little girl, and how "cute" she was. Her mother was some relative of Mrs. Lindsay. Leone and Vila looked at her eagerly. The boys hung back but they wanted to see her. Mr. Lindsay was proud. He said:

"Well, sir, I've got somebody along with me!"

"I see you have!" Mr. Sieverson answered with shy heavy jocularity and Mrs. Sieverson asked, "Is this the little girl been visiting you?"

"This is the little girl! But I don't know whether she's visiting or not. I've just about made up my mind I'll keep her!"

They all laughed appreciatively. Leone pulled her mother's dress. She wanted her mother to ask if the little girl couldn't get out and play with them. "Now, don't. We'll see," Mrs. Sieverson whispered. The little girl was so pretty sitting there with her soft golden-brown hair and her cream-white dress that Mr and Mrs. Sieverson were both shy of saying anything directly to her. Mr. Sieverson cried, still trying conscientiously to joke:

"Well, ain't you going to get out?"

---

[1] From *Harper's Magazine*. August, 1927; copyright, 1927, by Harper & Brothers. Reprinted by permission of the author.

Mr. Lindsay asked, "Well!—shall we, Patricia?"

The little girl looked gravely at the other little girls, and then nodded.

"All right, sir! Patricia's the boss! I've got to do as she says."

She consented to smile at that, and the two boys giggled. Mr. Lindsay lifted her out of the car. She put her arms around his neck, and her little legs and her feet in their shiny black slippers dangled as he swung her to the ground. The children felt shy when he set her down among them. Mr. and Mrs. Sieverson didn't quite know what to say.

"*There* she is! This is the first time this little girl has ever been out to a farm. What do you think of that, Marvin?"

Marvin grinned, and backed off a few steps.

"Yes, sir! But she and Uncle Dave have great times driving round together, don't they?"

The little girl looked up at him and then smiled and nodded her head with a subtle hint of mischief.

"You bet we do! We have great times."

The Sieversons all stood back in a group shyly grinning and admiring. Leone's eyes were as eager as if she were looking at a big doll in a store window. They had never seen any child as pretty as this one, and Mr. Lindsay knew it and was brimming with pride. Her short dress of creamy linen, tied with a red-silk cord at the neck and embroidered with patches of bright Russian colors, melted its fairness into the pure lovely pallor of her skin. The sleeves were so short that almost the whole of her soft, round, tiny arms was bare. Her hair was of fine gold streaked and overlaid with brown—the color of a straw stack with the darker richer brown on top—but every hair lay fine and perfect, the thick bangs waved slightly on her forehead, and the long soft bob curved out like a shining flower bell and shook a little when she moved her head. Her skin wasn't one bit sun-burned, and so white and delicately grained that there seemed to Vila, in awe, to be a little frost upon it . . . like the silver bloom on wildflower petals, picked in cool places, that smudged when she rubbed it with her fingers.

Mr. Lindsay became businesslike now that he was out of the car. "Well, Henry," he said, "you got it all figured up and ready to show me? I think we've got Appleton where we can make a deal all right."

"Yeah, I guess it's ready."

While the two men talked the little girl stood beside Mr. Lindsay, her hand still in his, with a grave, trustful, wondering look. Leone, smiling at her, was getting closer. Mr. Lindsay seemed to remember her then and looked down at her.

"Well, Patricia, what about you while I'm looking after my business?" He smiled then at the other children. "Think you can find something to do with all these kids here?"

Leone looked up at him and her blue eyes pleaded brightly in her eagerness. "I guess they's plenty of them to look after her," Mr. Sieverson said shyly but still grinning. "They can entertain her," Mrs. Sieverson put in. She could do the baking without Leone this morning, she thought rapidly but feeling hurried and anxious.

"You going to play with them for a while, are you?" Mr. Lindsay felt responsible for Patricia. All the same he wanted her off his mind for a while until he had finished his business. "I don't know whether—"

"Oh, Leone'll look after her," Mrs. Sieverson assured him, and Mr. Sieverson repeated, "Sure! She'll be all right with Leone."

Leone came up now, smiling eagerly and with a sweetness that transformed her thin freckled face. She shook back the wisps of uneven, tow-colored hair. She took the little girl's hand protectingly and confidingly in her hot palm that had a gleam of dusty perspiration along the life-line and the heart-line. The tiny hand felt like a soft warm bit of silk—or a flower.

"That's right! Uncle Dave won't be gone long. Don't take her out where it's too hot, kids. You know she isn't used to things the way you are."

"No, you be careful," Mrs. Sieverson warned them.

"Will you go with Leone?" The little girl did not say that she would or wouldn't, but she was courteous and did not draw back. "You'll be all right! *You'll* have a good time! Oh, I guess Uncle Dave didn't tell these kids who you were, did he? This is Patricia."

"Can you say that?" Mrs. Sieverson asked—doubting if *she* could.

Vila drew shyly back, with one shoulder higher than the other; but Leone laughed in delight. "I can say it!" She nodded. She squeezed Patricia's hand.

"You can say it, can you? All right, then. Well now, you

kids can show this little girl what good times you can have on the farm. That so? All right then, Henry."

Mrs. Sieverson went into the house to get back to her baking. She had a lot to do to-day. She wasn't at all worried about leaving their little visitor so long as Leone was with her. But she turned to call back to the children, who were still silently grouped about Patricia in the driveway:

"You better stay in the yard with her. Mr. Lindsay won't like it if she gets her dress dirty. Leone! You hear me?"

"I heard. Do you want to come into the yard, Patricia? You do, don't you?" Leone asked coaxingly.

Patricia went soberly with her. Her eyes, gray with threads of violet in the clear iris, were looking all about silently. Her little hand lay quiet but with confidence in Leone's. The other children followed, the boys lagging behind, but coming all the same.

"There now! Here's just the nicest shady place, and Patricia can sit here, can't she, and just be so nice?" Leone placed Patricia in the round patterned shade of an apple tree, and spread out her linen dress, making it perfectly even all around, and carefully drew out her little legs straight in front of her with the shiny black slippers close together. "There!" she said proudly. "See?"

She sat down on one side of Patricia, and then Vila shyly and with a sidelong confiding smile sat down on the other. The boys hung back together.

"Leone!" Mrs. Sieverson called from the house. "Ain't you got something to entertain her with? Why don't you get your dolls?"

"Do you want to see our dolls, Patricia?"

So far Patricia had been consenting but silent. "You go in and get them, Vila," Leone ordered and when Vila whined, "I don't want to!" she said, "Yes, you have to. I can't leave her. I have to take care of her. Don't I, Patricia?" But when Vila came back with the scanty assortment of dolls Patricia looked at them and then reached out her hand for the funny cloth boy doll in the knitted sweater suit. The boys laughed proudly and looked at each other, the way they had done when the swan in the park at Swea City took the piece of sandwich they put on the water for it. "Isn't that doll cute, Patricia?" Leone begged eagerly.

Patricia touched its black-embroidered eyes, and its red-embroidered lips—done in outline stitch—and then looked up at the eager, watching children and smiled with that gleam of mischief.

The boys laughed again. They all came around closer. "That's mine," Vila said softly. She reached over and touched the big stuffed cloth doll, with the hair colored yellow and the cheeks bright red, that was smooth along the top and bottom sides like a fish but crisp along the edges from the seams. Patricia took it and looked at it. She looked at every one of their dolls—there were five, one of them was a six-inch bisque doll from the ten-cent store—and then smiled again.

"I'll bet you have nice dolls at home, haven't you, Patricia?" Leone said in generous worship. "I'll bet you've got lots nicer dolls than we have."

Patricia spoke for the first time. The children listened, with bright eager eyes wide open, to each soft little word.

"I have fifteen dolls."

Marvin said, "Gee!"

"Have you got them named?" Vila leaned over the grass toward Patricia, and then quickly hitched herself back, frightened at the sound of her own voice asking the question.

"Oh, yes, I always name my dolls," Patricia assured them. "My dolls have beautiful names. They're all the names of the great actresses and singers." And she began gravely to repeat them. "Geraldine Farrar, and Maria Jeritza, and Eva LeGallienne, and Amelita Galli-Curci—"

While she was saying them the boys looked at each other over her head, their eyes glinting, their mouths stretched into grins of smothered amusement, until Clyde broke into giggles.

Leone was indignant. "Those are *lovely* names! I think Patricia was just wonderful to think of them!"

Vila stretched across the grass again. She touched the cloth doll and drew back her fingers as quickly as if it were hot. "Her name's Dor'thy," she whispered.

After Patricia's gracious acceptance of the dolls the children wanted to show her all the treasures they had—even those they had never told anyone else about. Everything, they felt, would receive a kind of glory from her approval. They liked to repeat her name now. "Patricia." "She wants to see the little pigs. Don't you, Patricia?" "Aw, she does not! Do you, Patricia?

She wants to see what I've got to make a radio." Patricia looked from one to the other with her violet-gray eyes and let the others answer for her. But after a while she said with a cool, gentle, royal decision:

"No. I don't want to go anywhere. I want to stay right here in this round shade."

The children were highly delighted. They began to bring their treasures to her. Vila had run off to the edge of the garden and dug up two glass precious stones she had buried there, but when she came back to Patricia she was too shy to show them and kept them hidden in her hot little hand that got sticky and black from the earth clinging to them. The boys were getting quite bold. Marvin said:

"I bet you never saw a mouse nest, Patricia."

"Patricia doesn't care anything about that," Leone said impatiently. "I wish you boys would go off somewhere anyway and let *us* look after Patricia."

"I can show it to you, Patricia."

"*She* doesn't want to see that!"

"Yes, I do," Patricia assured them with an innocent courtesy that made Clyde giggle again.

The boys ran off to the wood-shed to get it. It was all made of wound-about string and little bits of paper and a soft kind of woolly-down. Patricia examined it with her large grave eyes. She reached out one finger toward it delicately, and drew the finger back. She looked up at the boys.

"What is it?" she breathed.

"A mouse nest," Marvin said nonchalantly.

He held it, carefully in his brown sturdy hands, partly to keep it together, but more because he liked to have Patricia's soft little fingers come near his. They were as smooth as silk, and rosy at the tips as the pointed petals of the dog-tooth violets he had found near the little creek in the woods, when he was cut there one day last April all alone. A happy shiver went over him at the thought of their touching him, silvery and cool.

"Do the mouses—*mices*—live in it?"

"Sure! They did before we took it away."

"Oh, but can't they live in it any more? What will the mices do?"

"Gee! What can they do?" Marvin swaggered. Clyde giggled. Her pink mouth opened into a distressed O. She looked from

one to the other for help, and the violet in her eyes deepened. "But they won't have anywhere to live! You must put it back." She was very serious.

"Shoot! Why, they've run off somewheres else by this time!"

What did it matter about mice anyhow? Gee, they were something to get rid of! Why did she suppose pop kept all those cats and fed 'em, if it wasn't to get rid of the mice? But she looked so distressed that Leone, with an angry glance at the boys, assured her hastily, leaning over and hugging her:

"No, they haven't, Patricia! Boys just like to say things like that."

"Aw, gee—!"

"But what will the mices *do?*"

"The boys'll put the nest back, and then the mice'll come there," Leone warmly promised her. She didn't care if it wasn't true.

The boys had never heard anything so funny in their lives. Gee whiz! They despised her for such ignorance, and could hardly keep from laughing, and yet they felt uneasily ashamed of themselves for they didn't quite know what. They had just wanted to bring her the mouse nest to make her interested and then to show her, too, that they weren't afraid of things most people didn't want to touch. But they seemed to be out of favor. They hung around while the girls talked a lot of silly talk, and laid all the dolls out in the grass in front of them.

"I'll bet you've got awful pretty clothes for your dolls, haven't you, Patricia?"

Patricia didn't like to say, or to talk about her dolls because she didn't really think that these dolls' dresses were one bit pretty. Leone went on questioning her, with naïve admiration, and Vila listened with her eyes glistening.

"I'll bet you've been into lots of big stores, Patricia. Did this dress you've got on come from a big store?"

They both bent and examined the creamy shining linen with its coarse silky weave and the large roughened threads that Vila scarcely dared to touch with her fingers all dirty from the precious stones. Patricia graciously let them touch and see until, gently but with a final dignity, she drew the cloth out of their fingers.

"Now, you mustn't touch me any more."

The boys giggled again at this, admiring but feeling abashed.

A striped kitten came suddenly into sight at a little distance—

became motionless, saw them—and flattened and slid under the cover of the plants in the garden. Patricia gave a little cry. Her face bloomed into brightness.

"Oh! Do you have a kitty?"

"A cat! Gee!" They all laughed. "*One* cat! I bet we got seventeen."

"Really seventeen kitties? Did your father buy them all for you?"

"Buy them!" The boys shouted with laughter. "Gee, you don't buy cats!"

"Oh, you do," Patricia told them, shocked. "They cost twenty-five dollars, the kitties that sit in the window in the shop."

"Twenty-five dollars! Pay twenty-five dollars for a *cat!*" *Cats,* when you had to drown half of 'em and couldn't hardly give the others away! The boys were hilarious with laughter over such ignorance.

Leone couldn't help knowing that Patricia was ignorant, too. But she gave the boys a hurt, indignant, silencing look—it was mean of them to laugh at Patricia when she didn't know! Anyway, she was so little. Leone put her arm around Patricia in warm protection.

"But they do!" Patricia's eyes were large and tearful and her soft little lips were quivering. It was dreadful to have these children not believe her, and she couldn't understand it. "Some of them cost a hundred dollars!"

"Oh, gee—!" the boys began.

"Maybe some of them *do,*" Leone said quickly. "You don't know everything in the world, Marvin Sieverson." She knew, of course, that cats couldn't—but then, she wasn't going to have the boys make fun of Patricia. "Come on now, Patricia," she pleaded. "We'll go and see our kitties. Shall we?"

The boys watched anxiously. They didn't want Patricia to be mad at them. They wanted to take her out to the barn and have her look at everything.

She considered. Her eyes were still large and mournful and a very dark violet. At last she nodded her head, held out her hands trustingly to Leone to be helped from the grass, smoothed down her skirts—and the whole tribe went running off together.

Patricia had to climb up the steep stairs into the haymow one step at a time. She felt along the rough sides carefully with

her little hands. The boys would have liked to help her and were too bashful, but all the time Leone was just behind her, telling her, "Don't you be afraid. Leone's right here, Patricia. Leone won't let you fall." When they got up into the haymow Patricia was almost frightened at first; it was so big, and there were such shadows. A long beam of sunlight fell dimly and dustily golden from the high windows in the peak, across the great beams and the piled hay, and widened over the great stretch of wooden floor.

"Haven't you ever been up in a haymow before?" Clyde demanded.

"Of course she hasn't," Leone answered indignantly.

Patricia looked around at them, and her face was pale with awed excitement. "It's like the church!" she breathed.

"Gee, a *hay*mow!"

Still, it really was. Even their voices and the way they walked sounded different up here. The boys were tickled and a little embarrassed that Patricia had thought of that.

"Is this where the kitties live?"

"The little ones do. Where are the little bitty ones, Marvin?"

"*I* know!" both the boys shouted. They leaped up into the sliding mounds of hay, calling back, "Come on if you want to see, Patricia!"

"I'll help you, Patricia," Leone encouraged her.

She boosted and got Patricia up on to the hay pile and helped her flounder along with her feet plunging into uncertain holes, and the long spears of hay scratching at her bare legs above the half socks, and the dust making her eyes smart. Then Patricia began to laugh. She liked it!

"Here they are!" the boys shouted.

A bevy of half-grown cats suddenly fled down the hay like shadows. "No, no!" Patricia screamed when the boys tried valiantly to catch a little black cat by its tail. Leone was assuring her, "Never mind, they won't hurt the kitties, Patricia."

"Look here! Come here!" the boys were calling.

Patricia was almost afraid to go. The boys had found the nest of little kittens. They had got hold of the soft, mousy, wriggling things and were holding them up for her to see. Fascinated, she went nearer. The little kittens had pink skin fluffed over with the finest fur, big round heads, and little snubby ears, and blue eyes barely open.

"Oh! . . . " She looked up at Leone with her pink lips pursed.

She loved the little kittens but she was afraid of them. "Oh, but they aren't kitties! They don't look like kitties."

The boys were highly amused. "What do they look like?" Marvin demanded. "What do you think they are? Cows? Horses?"

She said tremulously, "No, I *know* cows are big. But their heads look the way little baby cow heads do in the pictures. They do."

"I think they do, too," Leone asserted stoutly. She coaxed, "Touch them, Patricia. They won't hurt you."

The boys grinned at the way Patricia put out her fingers and drew them back. How could these little bits of kittens hurt her? Didn't she know they couldn't bite yet? Their little teeny teeth couldn't do anything but nibble. It was fun to feel them. Marvin caught up the white one and held it out to her, and they all kept urging her. He hoped her fingers would touch his. She cringed back, her mouth pursed in wonder.

"Oh, but they have such funny tails!"

"No, they ain't. They got tails like all cats got."

"Oh, no, Marvin. In the show the kitties had tails so big and they waved them—just like the big plumes on men's hats, riding on horses."

The boys doubled up with laughter. "Who'd put cats in a show?"

"Oh, but they are!" Patricia looked at them in distress.

"Why shouldn't they be?" Leone demanded.

Of course she knew why, as well as the boys did. Nobody would pay to see a cat! Patricia had meant the tigers. She was so little she didn't know the difference. The boys were not to tease her, though! Clyde was giggling. Gee, if she didn't have the funniest notions!

At last they got her to touch the kitten. She did it at first with just the pink tip of one finger—then it felt so soft, so little and fluffy, with tiny whiskers like fine silk threads, that she reached out her hands. Marvin felt the brush of her fingers, as if a cobweb had blown across his hand, and a shiver of joy and pain went down his backbone. Patricia laughed in delight, and looked from one to the other of the children with her large shining eyes, to share her wonder.

"Take it!" Marvin urged.

"Oh, no, I wouldn't!"

"Why not? Go on and take it!"

She shook her head.

"She doesn't have to if she doesn't want to," Leone said warmly.

"Yes, she does!" Marvin thrust the kitten into her hands. She gave a little shriek and squeezed it by its soft belly, while the weak pinkish legs wavered and clawed out of her grasp.

"I'm going to drop it!"

"No, you won't!"

Its fluffiness filled her with ecstasy. "Oh, see its claws! They look like little bits of shavings from mother's pearl beads!" The boys grinned in amusement and delight at each other. Vila laughed happily. "Oh, and inside its little ears! Just the way shells look inside—only these are *silk* shells!" The boys grinned broadly. She caught the kitten to her cheek and held it wildly wriggling. "Oh, kitty, I love you! I want to have you to take home!"

"You can—you can have it," the children all urged her eagerly. Marvin said, "Gee, we got all kinds of cats, and that old gray one—" Clyde pinched him. "Shut up!" He grinned and blushed. Patricia laid the kitten gravely and reluctantly back in the rounded nest. She shook her head until the fluffy bell of shining hair trembled. She said solemnly, and as if she had forgotten that the others were there:

"No. I won't. Because all its other little sisters and brothers would be lonesome for it. And its mother would."

The boys stood grinning but they said nothing.

What were the kittens' names? Patricia asked. She was horrified that they had none. "Gee, we call 'em kitty," Marvin said; but Leone hastened to add, "Well, we call that one we have Old Gray." Patricia said:

"Oh, but they must have names! That's wicked. Nobody goes up to heaven to our Lord Jesus without a name!"

The boys just barely glanced at each other. They kept their red faces straight with agony. Then Marvin went pawing and rolling through the hay over to the other side of the pile where he buried his flushed face and snorted.

"I'm going to give every one a name," Patricia asserted solemnly.

"What are you going to name 'em, Patricia?" Leone and Vila were impressed.

"I'm going to give them jewel names. Because the cats make me think about things like jewels. This is what I'm going to call them. I'm going to name this one Pearl because it's white, and this bluey one Sapphire, and the other bluey one Turquoise, and this little pinky one Coral, and this one . . . Jade!"

"Aren't you going to name one Di'mond, Patricia?" Leone asked eagerly. Vila thought that, too.

"No." Patricia was very decided. "Cats don't look like diamonds. They look like colored jewels."

The boys giggled. Besides, that one she had named *Pearl*—gee, they had already looked at these kittens and they knew very well that one was a he-cat! If she wasn't funny!

Vila was looking at Patricia so intently that she trembled. Now she said, "Patricia's eyes are jewel eyes, too. They're—they're . . ." She didn't know how to say it, and yet she felt what she meant and wanted to say—felt it so that it hurt! The whites of Patricia's eyes gleamed, and a little blue spread out into them from the circles of the colored parts, and in these there were all sorts of threads of color woven together, the way they were inside the glass of marbles—bluish and violet-colored and gray, and a sort of golden! All just as clear . . . Vila reached out and took Patricia's wrist quickly and with shy ardor, but then she only smiled and couldn't think of anything to say . . . she would have been afraid to say it, anyway.

"Now she must see all our places!"

They went through the big barn. "Look here, Patricia!" "Patricia can't. She's looking at this." She looked at everything, but when they urged her, "Touch it! Go ahead!" she wouldn't quite do that. When they went out of the barn they all took hands and ran pounding down the long slope of heavy boards and out into the farmyard. Patricia was afraid at first and then shrieked with laughter and wanted to do it over again.

"Now we mustn't do it any more," Leone said after the third time. "Her little face is all red. Let go her hand, Marvin! Now, darling, stand still, and Leone'll wipe off her little face."

They thought it was funny the way she ran when the chickens came near her. "Oh, gee, if we had time we'd go down to the pond and show her the geese. Wouldn't she run if that old goose got after her!" Leone said, "Marvin Sieverson! We shan't go there."

But the very best place was the orchard. Even the boys were not so wild and noisy there. Their feet made only soft swishing sounds when they went through the long grass. The boughs were loaded, some broken and sweeping the ground, and the sky was patterned with leaves.

"Patricia!" Marvin hinted, tempting her, holding out a little green apple.

Leone snatched it from his hand. "Why, Marvin Sieverson, shame on you! Do you want to make little Patricia sick?"

"Aw, gee!" He had just wanted to see if she would take it. He and Clyde had both been hunting through the grass for some apples that Patricia could really eat.

Only the yellow transparents were ripe. The large apples had a clear pale color against the leaves that were only slightly darker —mellow and clear at the same time, a light pure yellow-green through which the August sunshine seemed to pass. Patricia took the big yellow apple that Marvin picked for her and carried it all around with her. "*Eat* it, Patricia, why don't you?" But she wanted to hold it. "Oh, thank you!" she said very earnestly for every single thing the children gave her—the red dahlia, and the tiny bunch of sweet peas, the bluebird's feather. Whenever she saw a bird she stopped. She put her little silky hand on Leone's wrist. "Look!" "It's just a bird." She stood and watched with fascinated eyes until the bird was lost in the sky and she had to turn away dazzled with blue and gold.

"Do you wish you could stay here and belong to us, Patricia?" Leone asked her wistfully. "We'd play you were my little girl, wouldn't we?"

Patricia wished that she could stay. There were streaks of dust down the shining linen dress and on the soft little arms, a damp parting in the lovely wave of the bangs, and around her mouth there was a faint stain of red from the juicy plums the boys had brought her to suck. Oh, yes, the country, she said, was *nice!* She looked about with shining innocent eyes of wonder. She loved the animals. In the city, she told them, animals weren't happy. There were the beautiful green birds in the shop—just the color, almost, of these apple-tree leaves!—but her father wouldn't buy them for her because he didn't believe in keeping things in cages, and he wouldn't get her the big gray dog because it wasn't right to take dogs out on chains.

"Oh, if I lived in the country," she cried, "do you know what I'd do? I'd just run around and run around—"

"You'd play with *me,* wouldn't you, Patricia?" Marvin cut in jealously.

"I'd play—"

"Children!"

The grown people were calling them. Disaster showed on the children's faces. "Oh, we don't want Patricia to go home!" There were so many things still that they hadn't shown her. But Mr. Lindsay came into the orchard calling out jovially:

"Well! Here she is! Ready to go home now with Uncle Dave?" He took it for granted that she was. He took her reluctant little hand, and the other children trailed after them. When they reached the farmyard, he said, "See what's going with us!"

Patricia looked in awe and wonderment. "What is it?" she breathed.

"Don't you know what that is?"

Mr. and Mrs. Sieverson, standing back, both laughed. The children too were grinning.

Patricia ventured, "A baby cow!"

Then they all laughed to think that she had known.

"That's what it is, all right. But don't you know what baby cows are called? Calf! That's a calf! Well sir, do you want this little calf to go with us?"

Patricia didn't know whether or not Uncle Dave meant that for a joke. But the little calf was so sweet—she loved it so terribly the instant she saw it—that she couldn't help risking that and begging, "Oh, yes!" Its head really was shaped like the tiny kittens'. But its eyes were very large and colored a soft deep brown under a surface of rounded brightness so gentle and so sad too, that it seemed to her as if the color showed in each eye under a big tear. The calf turned its head toward her. Its frail legs bent inward, to prop it up. Its coat looked like cream spilled over with shining tar. There were curls, like the curly knots showing in freshly planed wood; and the shining ends of the hair looked as if they had curled because the whole coat had just been licked by the mother.

"Oh, yes, Uncle Dave! Is it going *with* us?"

"It's going to be our back-seat passenger. If the boss permits?"

It made Mr. Sieverson laugh—feel tickled—to see how the

thought of riding to town with that calf pleased the little girl. But he said dutifully to Mr. Lindsay:

"Now, if that calf's going to be any nuisance to you—"

"No, no. As long as I've got the old car, put it in. Tie it up."

Patricia saw the rope then in Mr. Sieverson's hand. She cried, "Oh, not *tie* the little calf!"

"Sure," Mr. Sieverson said, grinning kindly at her. "You don't want it to jump out, do you?"

She looked at Uncle Dave for confirmation of that. He said: "Sure! Calves won't go riding any other way."

The two boys laughed.

Patricia stood back close to Leone but not saying anything more. She looked frightened. Mr. Sieverson said, with some feeling of reassuring her still more.

"You don't want to let this calf get loose or you won't get any of it!"

She didn't understand that.

"Get any of it to eat. This calf's going to make veal."

"Eat it?" she cried in horror; and she earnestly put him right. "Oh, no, I wouldn't *eat* it." Mr. Sieverson was joking.

"Why, sure!" he said. "Don't you eat good veal. You're going to take this calf to the butcher."

"Oh, no!" He meant that! Patricia was suddenly wild with crying. They all stood back, shocked, never expecting such a a storm as this. "Oh, no! The little calf isn't going to be killed! I won't! I won't! No!" She put out her hands blindly and turned from one to the other for help. Mr. Sieverson didn't know what to do. She turned to him and beat the air with her little fists, shrieking, "Oh, you're *wicked!*"

He couldn't stand that. His face got red. Even if she was just a child, he demanded, "Don't you eat veal?"

"No! No!" Patricia shrieked.

"What, then?" he demanded.

She had to look at him. Her little pink mouth was open and her bright eyes drowned. She quavered, "Other kinds of meat . . . I'll eat chicken," and turned piteously to Uncle Dave.

Mr. Sieverson didn't like to be called "wicked" by anyone. The injustice, when he had just been trying to be nice to this little girl, too, hurt him. His wife murmured, "Well, now, Henry—" But he insisted, "Don't chicken have to be killed before you can eat it?"

But even Mr. Sieverson, although he was in the right of it, felt ashamed when he saw the little thing cry. Mrs. Sieverson gave him a look, stroked Patricia's hair, and said, "They won't take the calf." Mr. Lindsay hastened to promise, "No, no. Of course we won't take the calf." They were all trying now to reassure her. Vila was crying too. The boys were pleading, "Patricia!" although they didn't know just what they would say to her in comfort if they got her to look at them. "No, no, it isn't going. It won't have to be tied up. See, he's put away the rope." The two men settled the thing with a look above her head. Patricia looked up at last, with piteous drowned eyes, as dark as wet violets. She broke away from all of them and, running to the calf—fearful of touching things as she was—she threw her arms in protection around its neck and stared fiercely at the shamefaced people.

"Oh, no, we couldn't take it!" Mr. Lindsay muttered. He cleared his throat.

The children surrounded Patricia again. They were begging her not to cry. Her cheek was laid against the little calf's silky ear, and she was telling it, in her own mind, "Don't you care, don't you mind, precious little calf, I've saved you." She let herself be drawn away but said "No!" when Mrs. Sieverson wanted to wipe the tears from her cheeks, and held up the little wet face trustingly for Leone to do it. That pleased all the Sieversons greatly.

"So now we can go! Hm?" Mr. Lindsay asked her.

She seemed to have forgiven them. She didn't want to look at Mr. Sieverson, but when she said good-by to Mrs. Sieverson she touched her little skirts and made a curtsey. Clyde pinched Marvin to tell him to look. The children watched her with as great delight as they had watched the tightrope walker in the "show." Mr. Lindsay lifted her into the car. She smiled faintly at the children, but there were stains of tears on her pearly cheeks, and her eyes were still as dark as violets.

"You children go get her something—apples or something," Mrs. Sieverson whispered.

"We have, mamma! We've got a whole lot of things for her."

They began piling presents into her lap. "Don't forget your little feather, Patricia!" Marvin ran off to find something else. The wilting flowers, the apple, the six rosy plums, the bluebird's feather she carefully took again. Marvin came panting back with

his new game of "Round the World by Aeroplane." But Mr. Lindsay wouldn't let him give her that.

"No, no, my boy! You keep your game. She's got more things at home now than she can ever play with."

Now she seemed happy and appeased. The children crowded close to the side of the car and pleaded, "Come out again, won't you, Patricia?" Vila whispered in her shy voice, "I'll take care of Pearl and Samphire and those others, Patricia." Marvin said fiercely, "If any tom cat comes round, I'll—" and ground and gnashed his teeth and made fiercely appropriate motions. Leone gave him a look for making her think about the tom cat! But Patricia was still smiling and happy and hadn't understood. Now, in her relief and in the flurry of going, she was more eager and talkative than she had been all afternoon. She promised everything they asked.

"I will. I will, Leone. I will, Marvin. Thank you for all the beautiful things."

In the midst of it Mr. Lindsay leaned over to say in a low tone to Mr. Sieverson, a little ashamed, "Well, somebody else'll take that in for you, Henry, if you can't go."

"Sure. That's all right, Mr. Lindsay."

"Well now, my little girl, tell them all good-by."

"Good-by." "Good-by, Patricia!" They called and waved madly to her, all standing back together. She answered them. At the very last minute, just as the car was going out into the driveway, she leaned out with her shining hair mussed and blowing in the breeze, and cried:

"Good-by, calf! I forgot to say good-by to you."

Marvin laughed in delight, and then Clyde echoed him.

Mr. Sieverson stood looking after the car. That "wicked" still rankled. He said, as if very much put out, "Well now, I'll have to find another way of getting this calf in or else take it myself before night." Then he said, as if ashamed, "Gosh! I don't know. I almost hate to take it. That little thing put up such a fuss." He couldn't help adding, "She was a pretty little kid, wasn't she?"

Mrs. Sieverson did not answer at once. Then she said in an expressionless tone, "Well . . . maybe you better take the other one, then."

He looked at her and seemed to want to assent. Then he cried,

"Oh, no! We can't do that. This is the one we'd picked on." He looked angry, and yet in his light-blue eyes under the shock of lightish hair there was a hurt, puzzled look. "Oh, well," he muttered. "Folks can't be foolish!" If ever folks were to start thinking of *such* things . . .

He went forward resolutely, saying "Hi! Stand still, there!" as he took hold of the calf. His wife stood back watching him and saying nothing. The calf turned, bolted a little way, and then let him take hold of it again. It did not seem to know whether to be afraid of him or not. Its eyes looked up into his. In the large eyes of dark mute brown and the smaller eyes of light blue there was much the same reluctant bewilderment in some far depths. But the man knew what he was after, and the calf did not know what was to come.

"Come on here!" Mr. Sieverson said sharply.

He put the rope around the calf's neck.

"LITTLE GENTLEMAN" [1]

By BOOTH TARKINGTON

THE midsummer sun was stinging hot outside the little barber-shop next to the corner drug store and Penrod, undergoing a toilette preliminary to his very slowly approaching twelfth birthday, was adhesive enough to retain upon his face much hair as it fell from the shears. There is a mystery here: the tonsorial processes are not unagreeable to manhood; in truth, they are soothing; but the hairs detached from a boy's head get into his eyes, his ears, his nose, his mouth, and down his neck, and he does everywhere itch excruciatingly. Wherefore he blinks, winks, weeps, twitches, condenses his countenance, and squirms; and perchance the barber's scissors clip more than intended—belike an outlying flange of ear.

"Um—muh—*ow!*" said Penrod, this thing having happened.

"D' I touch y' up a little?" inquired the barber, smiling falsely.

"Ooh—*uh!*" The boy in the chair offered inarticulate protest, as the wound was rubbed with alum.

"*That* don't hurt!" said the barber. "You *will* get it, though, if you don't sit stiller," he continued, nipping in the bud any attempt on the part of his patient to think that he already had "it."

"Pfuff!" said Penrod, meaning no disrespect, but endeavouring to dislodge a temporary moustache from his lip.

"You ought to see how still that little Georgie Bassett sits," the barber went on, reprovingly. "I hear everybody says he's the best boy in town."

"Puff! *Phirr!*" There was a touch of intentional contempt in this.

"I haven't heard nobody around the neighbourhood makin' no such remarks," added the barber, "about nobody of the name of Penrod Schofield."

"Well," said Penrod, clearing his mouth after a struggle, "who wants 'em to? Ouch!"

---

[1] From *Penrod;* copyright, 1914, by Doubleday, Page & Company. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

"I hear they call Georgie Bassett the 'little gentleman,'" ventured the barber, provocatively, meeting with instant success.

"They better not call *me* that," returned Penrod truculently. "I'd like to hear anybody try. Just once, that's all! I bet they'd never try it ag——*Ouch!*"

"Why? What'd you do to 'em?"

"It's all right what I'd *do!* I bet they wouldn't want to call me that again long as they lived!"

"What'd you do if it was a little girl? You wouldn't hit her, would you?"

"Well, I'd—— Ouch!"

"You wouldn't hit a little girl, would you?" the barber persisted, gathering into his powerful fingers a mop of hair from the top of Penrod's head and pulling that suffering head into an unnatural position. "Doesn't the Bible say it ain't never right to hit the weak sex?"

"Ow! *Say,* look *out!*"

"So you'd go and punch a pore, weak, little girl, would you?" said the barber, reprovingly.

"Well, who said I'd hit her?" demanded the chivalrous Penrod. "I bet I'd *fix* her though, all right. She'd see!"

"You wouldn't call her names, would you?"

"No, I wouldn't! What hurt is it to call anybody names?"

"Is that *so!*" exclaimed the barber. "Then you was intending what I heard you hollering at Fisher's grocery delivery wagon driver fer a favour, the other day when I was goin' by your house, was you? I reckon I better tell him, because he says to me after*wards* if he ever lays eyes on you when you ain't in your own yard, he's goin' to do a whole lot o' things you ain't goin' to like! Yessir, that's what he says to *me!*"

"He better catch me first, I guess, before he talks so much."

"Well," resumed the barber, "that ain't sayin' what you'd do if a young lady ever walked up and called you a little gentleman. *I* want to hear what you'd do to her. I guess I know, though—come to think of it."

"What?" demanded Penrod.

"You'd sick that pore ole dog of yours on her cat, if she had one, I expect," guessed the barber derisively.

"No, I would not!"

"Well, what *would* you do?"

"I'd do enough. Don't worry about that!"

"Well, suppose it was a boy, then: what'd you do if a boy come up to you and says, 'Hello, little gentleman?'"

"He'd be lucky," said Penrod, with a sinister frown, "if he got home alive."

"Suppose it was a boy twice your size?"

"Just let him try," said Penrod ominously. "You just let him try. He'd never see daylight again; that's all!"

The barber dug ten active fingers into the helpless scalp before him and did his best to displace it, while the anguished Penrod, becoming instantly a seething crucible of emotion, misdirected his natural resentment into maddened brooding upon what he would do to a boy "twice his size" who should dare to call him "little gentleman." The barber shook him as his father had never shaken him; the barber buffeted him, rocked him frantically to and fro; the barber seemed to be trying to wring his neck; and Penrod saw himself in staggering zigzag pictures, destroying large screaming, fragmentary boys who had insulted him.

The torture stopped suddenly; and clenched, weeping eyes began to see again, while the barber applied cooling lotions which made Penrod smell like a coloured housemaid's ideal.

"Now what," asked the barber, combing the reeking locks gently, "what would it make you so mad fer, to have somebody call you a little gentleman? It's a kind of compliment, as it were, you might say. What would you want to hit anybody fer *that* fer?"

To the mind of Penrod, this question was without meaning or reasonableness. It was within neither his power nor his desire to analyze the process by which the phrase had become offensive to him, and was now rapidly assuming the proportions of an outrage. He knew only that his gorge rose at the thought of it.

"You just let 'em try it!" he said threateningly, as he slid down from the chair. And as he went out of the door, after further conversation on the same subject he called back those warning words once more: "Just let 'em try it! Just once—that's all *I* ask 'em to. They'll find out what they *get!*"

The barber chuckled. Then a fly lit on the barber's nose and he slapped at it, and the slap missed the fly but did not miss the nose. The barber was irritated. At this moment his birdlike eye gleamed a gleam as it fell upon customers approaching: the prettiest little girl in the world, leading by the hand her baby

brother, Mitchy-Mitch, coming to have Mitchy-Mitch's hair clipped, against the heat.

It was a hot day and idle, with little to feed the mind—and the barber was a mischievous man with an irritated nose. He did his worst.

Meanwhile, the brooding Penrod pursued his homeward way; no great distance, but long enough for several one-sided conflicts with malign insulters made of thin air. "You better *not* call me that!" he muttered. "You just try it, and you'll get what other people got when *they* tried it. You better not ack fresh with *me!* Oh, you *will,* will you?" He delivered a vicious kick full upon the shins of an iron fence-post, which suffered little, though Penrod instantly regretted his indiscretion. "Oof!" he grunted, hopping; and went on after bestowing a look of awful hostility upon the fence-post. "I guess you'll know better next time," he said, in parting, to his antagonist. "You just let me catch you around here again and I'll——" His voice sank to inarticulate but ominous murmurings. He was in a dangerous mood.

Nearing home, however, his belligerent spirit was diverted to happier interests by the discovery that some workmen had left a caldron of tar in the cross-street, close by his father's stable. He tested it, but found it inedible. Also, as a substitute for professional chewing-gum it was unsatisfactory, being insufficiently boiled down and too thin, though of a pleasant, lukewarm temperature. But it had an excess of one quality—it was sticky. It was the stickiest tar Penrod had ever used for any purposes whatsoever, and nothing upon which he wiped his hands served to rid them of it; neither his polka-dotted shirt waist nor his knickerbockers; neither the fence, nor even Duke, who came unthinkingly wagging out to greet him, and retired wiser.

Nevertheless, tar is tar. Much can be done with it, no matter what its condition; so Penrod lingered by the caldron, though from a neighbouring yard could be heard the voices of comrades, including that of Sam Williams. On the ground about the caldron were scattered chips and sticks and bits of wood to the number of a great multitude. Penrod mixed quantities of this refuse into the tar, and interested himself in seeing how much of it he could keep moving in slow swirls upon the ebon surface.

Other surprises were arranged for the absent workmen. The caldron was almost full, and the surface of the tar near the rim.

Penrod endeavoured to ascertain how many pebbles and brick-bats, dropped in, would cause an overflow. Labouring heartily to this end, he had almost accomplished it, when he received the suggestion for an experiment on a much larger scale. Embedded at the corner of a grass-plot across the street was a whitewashed stone, the size of a small watermelon and serving no purpose whatever save the questionable one of decoration. It was easily pried up with a stick; though getting it to the caldron tested the full strength of the ardent labourer. Instructed to perform such a task, he would have sincerely maintained its impossibility; but now, as it was unbidden, and promised rather destructive results, he set about it with unconquerable energy, feeling certain that he would be rewarded with a mighty splash. Perspiring, grunting vehemently, his back aching and all muscles strained, he progressed in short stages until the big stone lay at the base of the caldron. He rested a moment, panting, then lifted the stone, and was bending his shoulders for the heave that would lift it over the rim, when a sweet, taunting voice, close behind him, startled him cruelly.

"How do you do, *little gentleman!*"

Penrod squawked, dropped the stone, and shouted, "Shut up, you dern fool!" purely from instinct, even before his about-face made him aware who had so spitefully addressed him.

It was Marjorie Jones. Always dainty, and prettily dressed, she was in speckless and starchy white to-day, and a refreshing picture she made, with the new-shorn and powerfully scented Mitchy-Mitch clinging to her hand. They had stolen up behind the toiler, and now stood laughing together in sweet merriment. Since the passing of Penrod's Rupe Collins period he had experienced some severe qualms at the recollection of his last meeting with Marjorie and his Apache behaviour; in truth, his heart instantly became as wax at sight of her, and he would have offered her fair speech; but, alas! in Marjorie's wonderful eyes there shone a consciousness of new powers for his undoing, and she denied him opportunity.

"Oh, *oh!*" she cried, mocking his pained outcry. "What a way for a *little gentleman* to talk! Little gentlemen don't say wicked——"

"Marjorie!" Penrod, enraged and dismayed, felt himself stung beyond all endurance. Insult from her was bitterer to endure than from any other. "Don't you call me that again!"

"Why not, *little gentleman?*"

He stamped his foot. "You better stop!"

Marjorie sent into his furious face her lovely, spiteful laughter.

"Little gentleman, little gentleman, little gentleman!" she said deliberately. "How's the little gentleman, this afternoon? Hello, little gentleman!"

Penrod, quite beside himself, danced eccentrically. "Dry up!" he howled. "Dry up, dry up, dry up, dry *up!*"

Mitchy-Mitch shouted with delight and applied a finger to the side of the caldron—a finger immediately snatched away and wiped upon a handkerchief by his fastidious sister.

" 'Ittle gellamun!" said Mitchy-Mitch.

"You better look out!" Penrod whirled upon this small offender with grim satisfaction. Here was at least something male that could without dishonour be held responsible. "You say that again, and I'll give you the worst——"

"You will *not!*" snapped Marjorie, instantly vitriolic. "He'll say just whatever he wants to, and he'll say it just as *much* as he wants to. Say it again, Mitchy-Mitch!"

" 'Ittle gellamun!" said Mitchy-Mitch promptly.

"Ow-*yah!*" Penrod's tone-production was becoming affected by his mental condition. "You say that again, and I'll——"

"Go on, Mitchy-Mitch," cried Marjorie. "He can't do a thing. He don't *dare!* Say it some more, Mitchy-Mitch—say it a whole lot!"

Mitchy-Mitch, his small, fat face shining with confidence in his immunity, complied.

" 'Ittle gellamun!" he squeaked malevolently. " 'Ittle gellamun! 'Ittle gellamun! 'Ittle gellamun!"

The desperate Penrod bent over the whitewashed rock, lifted it, and then—outdoing Porthos, John Ridd, and Ursus in one miraculous burst of strength—heaved it into the air.

Marjorie screamed.

But it was too late. The big stone descended into the precise midst of the caldron and Penrod got his mighty splash. It was far, far beyond his expectations.

Spontaneously there were grand and awful effects—volcanic spectacles of nightmare and eruption. A black sheet of eccentric shape rose out of the caldron and descended upon the three children, who had no time to evade it.

After it fell, Mitchy-Mitch, who stood nearest the caldron,

was the thickest, though there was enough for all. Bre'r Rabbit would have fled from any of them.

When Marjorie and Mitchy-Mitch got their breath, they used it vocally; and seldom have more penetrating sounds issued from human throats. Coincidentally, Marjorie, quite baresark, laid hands upon the largest stick within reach and fell upon Penrod with blind fury. He had the presence of mind to flee, and they went round and round the caldron, while Mitchy-Mitch feebly endeavoured to follow—his appearance, in this pursuit, being pathetically like that of a bug fished out of an ink-well, alive but discouraged.

Attracted by the riot, Samuel Williams made his appearance, vaulting a fence, and was immediately followed by Maurice Levy and Georgie Bassett. They stared incredulously at the extraordinary spectacle before them.

"Little GEN-TIL-MUN!" shrieked Marjorie, with a wild stroke that landed full upon Penrod's tarry cap.

"Oooch!" bleated Penrod.

"It's Penrod!" shouted Sam Williams, recognizing him by the voice. For an instant he had been in some doubt.

"Penrod Schofield!" exclaimed Georgie Bassett. *"What* does this mean?" That was Georgie's style, and had helped to win him his title.

Marjorie leaned, panting, upon her stick. "I cu-called—uh—him—oh!" she sobbed—"I called him a lul-little—oh—gentleman! And oh—lul-look!—oh! lul-look at my du-dress! Lul-look at Mumitchy—oh—Mitch—oh!"

Unexpectedly, she smote again—with results—and then, seizing the indistinguishable hand of Mitchy-Mitch, she ran wailing homeward down the street.

"'Little gentleman?'" said Georgie Bassett, with some evidences of disturbed complacency. "Why, that's what they call *me!*"

"Yes, and you *are* one, too!" shouted the maddened Penrod. "But you better not let anybody call *me* that! I've stood enough around here for one day, and you can't run over *me,* Georgie Bassett. Just you put that in your gizzard and smoke it!"

"Anybody has a perfect right," said Georgie, with dignity, "to call a person a little gentleman. There's lots of names nobody ought to call, but this one's a *nice*——"

"You better look out!"

Unavenged bruises were distributed all over Penrod, both upon his body and upon his spirit. Driven by subtle forces, he had dipped his hands in catastrophe and disaster: it was not for a Georgie Bassett to beard him. Penrod was about to run amuck.

"I haven't called you a little gentleman, yet," said Georgie. "I only said it. Anybody's got a right to *say* it."

"Not around *me!* You just try it again and——"

"I shall say it," returned Georgie, "all I please. Anybody in this town has a right to *say* 'little gentleman'——"

Bellowing insanely, Penrod plunged his right hand into the caldron, rushed upon Georgie and made awful work of his hair and features.

Alas, it was but the beginning! Sam Williams and Maurice Levy screamed with delight, and, simultaneously infected, danced about the struggling pair, shouting frantically:

"Little gentleman! Little gentleman! Sick him, Georgie! Sick him, little gentleman! Little gentleman! Little gentleman!"

The infuriated outlaw turned upon them with blows and more tar, which gave Georgie Bassett his opportunity and later seriously impaired the purity of his fame. Feeling himself hopelessly tarred, he dipped both hands repeatedly into the caldron and applied his gatherings to Penrod. It was bringing coals to Newcastle, but it helped to assuage the just wrath of Georgie.

The four boys gave a fine imitation of the Laocoön group complicated by an extra figure—frantic splutterings and chokings, strange cries and stranger words issued from this tangle; hands dipped lavishly into the inexhaustible reservoir of tar, with more and more picturesque results. The caldron had been elevated upon bricks and was not perfectly balanced; and under a heavy impact of the struggling group it lurched and went partly over, pouring forth a Stygian tide which formed a deep pool in the gutter.

It was the fate of Master Roderick Bitts, that exclusive and immaculate person, to make his appearance upon the chaotic scene at this juncture. All in the cool of a white "sailor suit," he turned aside from the path of duty—which led straight to the house of a maiden aunt—and paused to hop with joy upon

the sidewalk. A repeated epithet continuously half panted, half squawked, somewhere in the nest of gladiators, caught his ear, and he took it up excitedly, not knowing why.

"Little gentleman!" shouted Roderick, jumping up and down in childish glee. "Little gentleman! Little gentleman! Lit——"

A frightful figure tore itself free from the group, encircled this innocent bystander with a black arm, and hurled him headlong. Full length and flat on his face went Roderick into the Stygian pool. The frightful figure was Penrod. Instantly, the pack flung themselves upon him again, and, carrying them with him, he went over upon Roderick, who from that instant was as active a belligerent as any there.

Thus began the Great Tar Fight, the origin of which proved, afterward, so difficult for parents to trace, owing to the opposing accounts of the combatants. Marjorie said Penrod began it; Penrod said Mitchy-Mitch began it; Sam Williams said Georgie Bassett began it; Georgie and Maurice Levy said Penrod began it; Roderick Bitts, who had not recognized his first assailant, said Sam Williams began it.

Nobody thought of accusing the barber. But the barber did not begin it; it was the fly on the barber's nose that began it—though, of course, something else began the fly. Somehow, we never manage to hang the real offender.

The end came only with the arrival of Penrod's mother, who had been having a painful conversation by telephone with Mrs. Jones, the mother of Marjorie, and came forth to seek an errant son. It is a mystery how she was able to pick out her own, for by the time she got there his voice was too hoarse to be recognizable.

Mr. Schofield's version of things was that Penrod was insane. "He's a stark, raving lunatic!" declared the father, descending to the library from a before-dinner interview with the outlaw, that evening. "I'd send him to military school, but I don't believe they'd take him. Do you know *why* he says all that awfulness happened?"

"When Margaret and I were trying to scrub him," responded Mrs. Schofield wearily, "he said 'everybody' had been calling him names."

"'Names!'" snorted her husband. "'Little gentleman!' *That's* the vile epithet they called him! And because of it he wrecks the peace of six homes!"

"Sh! Yes; he told us about it," said Mrs. Schofield, moaning. "He told us several hundred times, I should guess, though I didn't count. He's got it fixed in his head, and we couldn't get it out. All we could do was to put him in the closet. He'd have gone out again after those boys if we hadn't. I don't know *what* to make of him!"

"He's a mystery to *me!*" said her husband. "And he refuses to explain why he objects to being called 'little gentleman.' Says he'd do the same thing again—and worse—if anybody dared to call him that again. He said if the President of the United States called him that he'd try to whip him. How long did you have him locked up in the closet?"

"Sh!" said Mrs. Schofield warningly. "About two hours; but I don't think it softened his spirit at all, because when I took him to the barber's to get his hair clipped again, on account of the tar in it, Sammy Williams and Maurice Levy were there for the same reason, and they just *whispered* 'little gentleman,' so low you could hardly hear them—and Penrod began fighting with them right before me, and it was really all the barber and I could do to drag him away from them. The barber was very kind about it, but Penrod——"

"I tell you he's a lunatic!" Mr. Schofield would have said the same thing of a Frenchman infuriated by the epithet "camel." The philosophy of insult needs expounding.

"Sh!" said Mrs. Schofield. "It does seem a kind of frenzy."

"Why on earth should any sane person mind being called——"

"Sh!" said Mrs. Schofield. "It's beyond *me!*"

"What are you *sh*-ing me for?" demanded Mr. Schofield explosively.

"Sh!" said Mrs. Schofield. "It's Mr. Kinosling, the new rector of Saint Joseph's."

"Sh! On the front porch with Margaret; he's going to stay for dinner. I do hope——"

"Bachelor, isn't he?"

"Yes."

"Our old minister was speaking of him the other day," said Mr. Schofield, "and he didn't seem so terribly impressed."

"Sh! Yes; about thirty, and of course *so* superior to most of Margaret's friends—boys home from college. She thinks she likes young Robert Williams, I know—but he laughs so much! Of course there isn't any comparison. Mr. Kinosling talks so

intellectually; it's a good thing for Margaret to hear that kind of thing, for a change—and, of course, he's very spiritual. He seems very much interested in her." She paused to muse. "I think Margaret likes him; he's so different, too. It's the third time he's dropped in this week, and I——"

"Well," said Mr. Schofield grimly, "if you and Margaret want him to come again, you'd better not let him see Penrod."

"But he's asked to see him; he seems interested in meeting all the family. And Penrod nearly always behaves fairly well at table." She paused, and then put to her husband a question referring to his interview with Penrod upstairs. "Did you—did you—do it?"

"No," he answered gloomily. "No, I didn't, but——" He was interrupted by a violent crash of china and metal in the kitchen, a shriek from Della, and the outrageous voice of Penrod. The well-informed Della, ill-inspired to set up for a wit, had ventured to address the scion of the house roguishly as "little gentleman," and Penrod, by means of the rapid elevation of his right foot, had removed from her supporting hands a laden tray. Both parents started for the kitchen, Mr. Schofield completing his interrupted sentence on the way.

"But I will, now!"

The rite thus promised was hastily but accurately performed in that apartment most distant from the front porch; and, twenty minutes later, Penrod descended to dinner. The Rev. Mr. Kinosling had asked for the pleasure of meeting him, and it had been decided that the only course possible was to cover up the scandal for the present, and to offer an undisturbed and smiling family surface to the gaze of the visitor.

Scorched but not bowed, the smouldering Penrod was led forward for the social formulæ simultaneously with the somewhat bleak departure of Robert Williams, who took his guitar with him, this time, and went in forlorn unconsciousness of the powerful forces already set in secret motion to be his allies.

The punishment just undergone had but made the haughty and unyielding soul of Penrod more stalwart in revolt; he was unconquered. Every time the one intolerable insult had been offered him, his resentment had become the hotter, his vengeance the more instant and furious. And, still burning with outrage, but upheld by the conviction of right, he was determined to continue to the last drop of his blood the defense of his

honour, whenever it should be assailed, no matter how mighty or august the powers that attacked it. In all ways, he was a very sore boy.

During the brief ceremony of presentation, his usually inscrutable countenance wore an expression interpreted by his father as one of insane obstinacy, while Mrs. Schofield found it an incentive to inward prayer. The fine graciousness of Mr. Kinosling, however, was unimpaired by the glare of virulent suspicion given him by this little brother: Mr. Kinosling mistook it for a natural curiosity concerning one who might possibly become, in time, a member of the family. He patted Penrod upon the head, which was, for many reasons, in no condition to be patted with any pleasure to the pattee. Penrod felt himself in the presence of a new enemy.

"How do you do, my little lad," said Mr. Kinosling. "I trust we shall become fast friends."

To the ear of his little lad, it seemed he said, "A trost we shall bick-home fawst frainds." Mr. Kinosling's pronunciation was, in fact, slightly precious; and the little lad, simply mistaking it for some cryptic form of mockery of himself, assumed a manner and expression which argued so ill for the proposed friendship that Mrs. Schofield hastily interposed the suggestion of dinner, and the small procession went into the dining-room.

"It has been a delicious day," said Mr. Kinosling, presently; "warm but balmy." With a benevolent smile he addressed Penrod, who sat opposite him. "I suppose, little gentleman, you have been indulging in the usual outdoor sports of vacation?"

Penrod laid down his fork and glared, open-mouthed at Mr. Kinosling.

"You'll have another slice of breast of the chicken?" Mr. Schofield inquired, loudly and quickly.

"A lovely day!" exclaimed Margaret with equal promptitude and emphasis. "Lovely, oh, lovely! Lovely!"

"Beautiful, beautiful, beautiful!" said Mrs. Schofield, and after a glance at Penrod which confirmed her impression that he intended to say something, she continued, "Yes, beautiful, beautiful, beautiful, beautiful, beautiful, beautiful!"

Penrod closed his mouth and sank back in his chair—and his relatives took breath.

Mr. Kinosling looked pleased. This responsive family, with its ready enthusiasm, made the kind of audience he liked. He

passed a delicate white hand gracefully over his tall, pale forehead, and smiled indulgently.

"Youth relaxes in summer," he said. "Boyhood is the age of relaxation; one is playful, light, free, unfettered. One runs and leaps and enjoys one's self with one's companions. It is good for the little lads to play with their friends; they jostle, push, and wrestle, and simulate little, happy struggles with one another in harmless conflict. The young muscles are toughening. It is good. Boyish chivalry develops, enlarges, expands. The young learn quickly, intuitively, spontaneously. They perceive the obligations of *noblesse oblige*. They begin to comprehend the necessity of caste and its requirements. They learn what birth means—ah—that is, they learn what it means to be well born. They learn courtesy in their games; they learn politeness, consideration for one another in their pastimes, amusements, lighter occupations. I make it my pleasure to join them often, for I sympathize with them in all their wholesome joys as well as in their little bothers and perplexities. I understand them, you see; and let me tell you it is no easy matter to understand the little lads and lassies." He sent to each listener his beaming glance, and, permitting it to come to rest upon Penrod, inquired:

"And what do you say to that, little gentleman?"

Mr. Schofield uttered a stentorian cough. "More? You'd better have some more chicken! More! Do!"

"More chicken!" urged Margaret simultaneously. "Do, please! Please! More! Do! More"

"Beautiful, beautiful," began Mrs. Schofield. "Beautiful, beautiful, beautiful, beautiful——"

It is not known in what light Mr. Kinosling viewed the expression of Penrod's face. Perhaps he mistook it for awe; perhaps he received no impression at all of its extraordinary quality. He was a rather self-engrossed young man, just then engaged in a double occupation, for he not only talked, but supplied from his own consciousness a critical though favourable auditor as well, which of course kept him quite busy. Besides, it is oftener than is suspected the case that extremely peculiar expressions upon the countenances of boys are entirely overlooked, and suggest nothing to the minds of people staring straight at them. Certainly Penrod's expression—which, to the perception of his family, was perfectly horrible—caused not the faintest perturbation in the breast of Mr. Kinosling.

Mr. Kinosling waived the chicken, and continued to talk. "Yes, I think I may claim to understand boys," he said, smiling thoughtfully. "One has been a boy one's self. Ah, it is not all playtime! I hope our young scholar here does not overwork himself at his Latin, at his classes, as I did, so that at the age of eight years I was compelled to wear glasses. He must be careful not to strain the little eyes at his scholar's tasks, not to let the little shoulders grow round over his scholar's desk. Youth is golden; we should keep it golden, bright, glistening. Youth should frolic, should be sprightly; it should play its cricket, its tennis, its hand-ball. It should run and leap; it should laugh, should sing madrigals and glees, carol with the lark, ring out in chanties, folk-songs, ballads, roundelays——"

He talked on. At any instant Mr. Schofield held himself ready to cough vehemently and shout, "More chicken," to drown out Penrod in case the fatal words again fell from those eloquent lips; and Mrs. Schofield and Margaret kept themselves prepared at all times to assist him. So passed a threatening meal, which Mrs. Schofield hurried, by every means within decency, to its conclusion. She felt that somehow they would all be safer out in the dark of the front porch, and led the way thither as soon as possible.

"No cigar, I thank you." Mr. Kinosling, establishing himself in a wicker chair beside Margaret, waved away her father's proffer. "I do not smoke. I have never tasted tobacco in any form." Mrs. Schofield was confirmed in her opinion that this would be an ideal son-in-law. Mr. Schofield was not so sure.

"No," said Mr. Kinosling. "No tobacco for me. No cigar, no pipe, no cigarette, no cheroot. For me, a book—a volume of poems, perhaps. Verses, rhymes, lines metrical and cadenced —those are my dissipation. Tennyson by preference: 'Maud,' or 'Idylls of the King'—poetry of the sound Victorian days; there is none later. Or Longfellow will rest me in a tired hour. Yes; for me, a book, a volume in the hand, held lightly between the fingers."

Mr. Kinosling looked pleasantly at his fingers as he spoke, waving his hand in a curving gesture which brought it into the light of a window faintly illumined from the interior of the house. Then he passed those graceful fingers over his hair, and turned toward Penrod, who was perched upon the railing in a dark corner.

"The evening is touched with a slight coolness," said Mr. Kinosling. "Perhaps I may request the little gentleman——"

"B'gr-r-*ruff!*" coughed Mr. Schofield. "You'd better change your mind about a cigar."

"No, I thank you. I was about to request the lit——"

"*Do* try one," Margaret urged. "I'm sure papa's are nice ones. Do try——"

"No, I thank you. I remarked a slight coolness in the air, and my hat is in the hallway. I was about to request——"

"I'll get it for you," said Penrod suddenly.

"If you will be so good," said Mr. Kinosling. "It is a black bowler hat, little gentleman, and placed upon a table in the hall."

"I know where it is." Penrod entered the door, and a feeling of relief, mutually experienced, carried from one to another of his three relatives their interchanged congratulations that he had recovered his sanity.

"'The day is done, and the darkness,'" began Mr. Kinosling —and recited that poem entire. He followed it with "The Children's Hour," and after a pause at the close, to allow his listeners time for a little reflection upon his rendition, he passed his hand again over his head, and called, in the direction of the doorway:

"I believe I will take my hat now, little gentleman."

"Here it is," said Penrod, unexpectedly climbing over the porch railing, in the other direction. His mother and father and Margaret had supposed him to be standing in the hallway out of deference, and because he thought it tactful not to interrupt the recitations. All of them remembered, later, that this supposed thoughtfulness on his part struck them as unnatural.

"Very good, little gentleman!" said Mr. Kinosling, and being somewhat chilled, placed the hat firmly upon his head, pulling it down as far as it would go. It had a pleasant warmth, which he noticed at once. The next instant, he noticed something else, a peculiar sensation of the scalp—a sensation which he was quite unable to define. He lifted his hand to take the hat off, and entered upon a strange experience: his hat seemed to have decided to remain where it was.

"Do you like Tennyson as much as Longfellow, Mr. Kinosling?" inquired Margaret.

"I—ah—I cannot say," he returned absently. "I—ah—each has his own—ugh! flavour and savour, each his—ah—ah——"

Struck by a strangeness in his tone, she peered at him curiously through the dusk. His outlines were indistinct, but she made out that his arms were uplifted in a singular gesture. He seemed to be wrenching at his head.

"Is—is anything the matter?" she asked anxiously. "Mr. Kinosling, are you ill?"

"Not at—ugh!—all," he replied, in the same odd tone. "I—ah—I believe—*ugh!*"

He dropped his hands from his hat, and rose. His manner was slightly agitated. "I fear I may have taken a trifling—ah—cold. I should—ah—perhaps be—ah—better at home. I will—ah—say good-night."

At the steps, he instinctively lifted his hand to remove his hat, but did not do so, and, saying "Good-night," again in a frigid voice, departed with visible stiffness from that house, to return no more.

"Well, of all——!" cried Mrs. Schofield, astounded. "What was the matter? He just went—like that!" She made a flurried gesture. "In heaven's name, Margaret, what *did* you say to him?"

"*I!*" exclaimed Margaret indignantly. "Nothing! He just *went!*"

"Why, he didn't even take off his hat when he said good-night!" said Mrs. Schofield.

Margaret, who had crossed to the doorway, caught the ghost of a whisper behind her, where stood Penrod.

"*You bet he didn't!*"

He knew not that he was overheard.

A frightful suspicion flashed through Margaret's mind—a suspicion that Mr. Kinosling's hat would have to be either boiled off or shaved off. With growing horror she recalled Penrod's long absence when he went to bring the hat.

"Penrod," she cried, "let me see your hands!"

She had toiled at those hands herself late that afternoon, nearly scalding her own, but at last achieving a lily purity.

"Let me see your hands!"

She seized them.

Again they were tarred!

THE STOLEN BACILLUS[1]

By H. G. WELLS

"THIS again," said the Bacteriologist, slipping a glass slide under the microscope, "is a preparation of the celebrated Bacillus of cholera—the cholera germ."

The pale-faced man peered down the microscope. He was evidently not accustomed to that kind of thing, and held a limp white hand over his disengaged eye. "I see very little," he said.

"Touch the screw," said the Bacteriologist; "perhaps the microscope is out of focus for you. Eyes vary so much. Just the fraction of a turn this way or that."

"Ah! now I see," said the visitor. "Not so very much to see, after all. Little streaks and shreds of pink. And yet those little particles, these mere atomies, might multiply and devastate a city! Wonderful!"

He stood up, and releasing the glass slip from the microscope, held it in his hand towards the window. "Scarcely visible," he said, scrutinizing the preparation. He hesitated. "Are these—alive? Are they dangerous now?"

"Those have been stained and killed," said the Bacteriologist. "I wish, for my own part, we could kill and stain every one of them in the universe."

"I suppose," the pale man said with a slight smile, "that you scarcely care to have such things about you in the living—in the active state?"

"On the contrary, we are obliged to," said the Bacteriologist. "Here, for instance—" He walked across the room and took up one of several sealed tubes. "Here is the living thing. This is a cultivation of the actual living disease bacteria." He hesitated. "Bottled cholera, so to speak."

A slight gleam of satisfaction appeared momentarily in the face of the pale man. "It's a deadly thing to have in your possession," he said, devouring the little tube with his eyes. The

[1] From *Thirty Strange Stories*, by H. G. Wells; copyright, 1897, by Edward Arnold. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Harper & Brothers.

Bacteriologist watched the morbid pleasure in his visitor's expression. This man, who had visited him that afternoon with a note of introduction from an old friend, interested him from the very contrast of their dispositions. The lank black hair and deep grey eyes, the haggard expression and nervous manner, the fitful yet keen interest of his visitor were a novel change from the phlegmatic deliberations of the ordinary scientific worker with whom the Bacteriologist chiefly associated. It was perhaps natural, with a hearer evidently so impressionable to the lethal nature of his topic, to take the most effective aspect of the matter.

He held the tube in his hand thoughtfully.

"Yes, here is the pestilence imprisoned. Only break such a little tube as this into a supply of drinking-water, say to these minute particles of life that one must needs stain and examine with the highest powers of the microscope even to see, and that one can neither smell nor taste—say to them, 'Go forth, increase and multiply, and replenish the cisterns,' and Death—mysterious, untraceable Death, Death swift and terrible, Death full of pain and indignity—would be released upon this city, and go hither and thither seeking his victims. Here he would take the husband from the wife, here the child from its mother, here the statesman from his duty, and here the toiler from his trouble. He would follow the water-mains, creeping along streets, picking out and punishing a house here and a house there where they did not boil their drinking-water, creeping into the wells of the mineral-water makers, getting washed into salad and lying dormant in ices. He would wait ready to be drunk in the horse-troughs, and by unwary children in the public fountains. He would soak into the soil, to reappear in springs and wells at a thousand unexpected places. Once start him at the water-supply, and before we could ring him in and catch him again he would have decimated the metropolis."

He stopped abruptly. He had been told rhetoric was his weakness.

"But he is quite safe here, you know—quite safe."

The pale-faced man nodded. His eyes shone. He cleared his throat. "These Anarchist-rascals," said he, "are fools, blind fools—to use bombs when this kind of thing is attainable. I think—"

A gentle rap, a mere light touch of the fingernails was heard

at the door. The Bacteriologist opened it. "Just a minute, dear," whispered his wife.

When he re-entered the laboratory his visitor was looking at his watch. "I had no idea I had wasted an hour of your time," he said. "Twelve minutes to four. I ought to have left here by half-past three. But your things were really too interesting. No, positively, I cannot stop a moment longer. I have an engagement at four."

He passed out of the room reiterating his thanks, and the Bacteriologist accompanied him to the door, and then returned thoughtfully along the passage to his laboratory. He was musing on the ethnology of his visitor. Certainly the man was not a Teutonic type nor a common Latin one. "A morbid product, anyhow, I am afraid," said the Bacteriologist to himself. "How he gloated on those cultivations of disease-germs!" A disturbing thought struck him. He turned to the bench by the vapour-bath, and then very quickly to his writing-table. Then he felt hastily in his pockets, and then rushed to the door. "I may have put it down on the hall table," he said.

"Minnie!" he shouted hoarsely in the hall.

"Yes, dear," came a remote voice.

"Had I anything in my hand when I spoke to you, dear, just now?"

Pause.

"Nothing, dear, because I remember—"

"Blue ruin!" cried the Bacteriologist, and incontinently ran to the front door and down the steps of his house to the street.

Minnie, hearing the door slam violently, ran in alarm to the window. Down the street a slender man was getting into a cab. The Bacteriologist, hatless, and in his carpet slippers, was running and gesticulating wildly toward this group. One slipper came off, but he did not wait for it. "He has gone *mad!*" said Minnie, "it's that horrid science of his;" and, opening the window, would have called after him. The slender man, suddenly glancing round, seemed struck with the same idea of mental disorder. He pointed hastily to the Bacteriologist, said something to the cabman, the apron of the cab slammed, the whip swished, the horse's feet clattered, and in a moment cab, and Bacteriologist hotly in pursuit, had receded upon the vista of the roadway and disappeared round the corner.

Minnie remained straining out of the window for a minute.

Then she drew her head back into the room again. She was dumbfounded. "Of course he is eccentric," she meditated. "But running about London—in the height of the season, too—in his socks!" A happy thought struck her. She hastily put her bonnet on, seized his shoes, went into the hall, took down his hat and light overcoat from the pegs, emerged upon the doorstep, and hailed a cab that opportunely crawled by. "Drive me up the road and round Havelock Crescent, and see if we can find a gentleman running about in a velveteen coat and no hat."

"Velveteen coat, ma'am, and no 'at. Very good, ma'am." And the cabman whipped up at once in the most matter-of-fact way, as if he drove to this address every day in his life.

Some few minutes later the little group of cabmen and loafers that collects round the cabmen's shelter at Haverstock Hill were startled by the passing of a cab with a ginger-coloured screw of a horse, driven furiously.

They were silent as it went by, and then as it receded—"That's 'Arry 'Icks. Wot's *he* got?" said the stout gentleman known as Old Tootles.

"He's a-using his whip, he is, *to* rights," said the ostler boy.

"Hullo!" said poor old Tommy Byles; "here's another bloomin' loonattic. Blowed if there ain't."

"It's old George," said Old Tootles, "and he's drivin' a loonattic, *as* you say. Ain't he a-clawin' out of the keb? Wonder if he's after 'Arry 'Icks?"

The group round the cabmen's shelter became animated. Chorus: "Go it, George!" "It's a race." "You'll ketch 'em!" "Whip up!"

"She's a goer, she is!" said the ostler boy.

"Strike me giddy!" cried Old Tootles. "Here! *I'm* a-goin' to begin in a minute. Here's another comin'. If all the kebs in Hampstead ain't gone mad this morning!"

"It's a fieldmale this time," said the ostler boy.

"She's a followin' *him*," said Old Tootles. "Usually the other way about."

"What's she got in her 'and?"

"Looks like a 'igh 'at."

"What a bloomin' lark it is! Three to one on old George," said the ostler boy. "Nexst!"

Minnie went by in a perfect roar of applause. She did not like it, but she felt that she was doing her duty, and whirled on down

Haverstock Hill and Camden Town High Street, with her eyes ever intent on the animated back view of old George, who was driving her vagrant husband so incomprehensibly away from her.

The man in the foremost cab sat crouched in the corner, his arms tightly folded, and the little tube that contained such vast possibilities of destruction gripped in his hand. His mood was a mixture of fear and exultation. Chiefly he was afraid of being caught before he could accomplish his purpose, but behind this was a vaguer but larger fear of the awfulness of his crime. But his exultation far exceeded his fear. No Anarchist before him had ever approached this conception of his. Ravachol, Vaillant, all those distinguished persons whose fame he had envied dwindled into insignificance beside him. He had only to make sure of the water-supply, and break the little tube into a reservoir. How brilliantly he had seized his opportunity! The world should hear of him at last. All those people who had sneered at him, neglected him, preferred other people to him, found his company undesirable, should consider him at last. Death, death, death! They had always treated him as a man of no importance. All the world had been in a conspiracy to keep him under. He would teach them yet what it is to isolate a man. What was this familiar street? Great Saint Andrew's Street, of course! How fared the chase? He craned out of the cab. The Bacteriologist was scarcely fifty yards behind. That was bad. He would be caught and stopped yet. He felt in his pocket for money, and found half-a-sovereign. This he thrust up through the trap in the top of the cab into the man's face. "More," he shouted, "if only we get away."

The money was snatched out of his hand. "Right you are," said the cabman, and the trap slammed, and the lash lay along the glistening side of the horse. The cab swayed, and the Anarchist, half-standing under the trap, put the hand containing the little glass tube upon the apron to preserve his balance. He felt the brittle thing crack, and the broken half of it rang upon the floor of the cab. He fell back into the seat with a curse, and stared dismally at the two or three drops of moisture on the apron.

He shuddered.

"Well! I suppose I shall be the first. *Phew!* Anyhow, I shall be a Martyr. That's something. But it is a filthy death, nevertheless. I wonder if it hurts as much as they say."

Presently a thought occurred to him—he groped between his feet. A little drop was still in the broken end of the tube, and he drank that to make sure. It was better to make sure. At any rate, he would not fail.

Then it dawned upon him that there was no further need to escape the Bacteriologist. In Wellington Street he told the cabman to stop, and got out. He slipped on the step, and his head felt queer. It was rapid stuff, this cholera poison. He waved his cabman out of existence, so to speak, and stood on the pavement with his arms folded upon his breast awaiting the arrival of the Bacteriologist. There was something tragic in his pose. The sense of imminent death gave him a certain dignity. He greeted his pursuer with a defiant laugh.

"Vive l'Anarchie! You are too late, my friend. I have drunk it. The cholera is abroad!"

The Bacteriologist from his cab beamed curiously at him through his spectacles. "You have drunk it! An Anarchist! I see now." He was about to say something more, and then checked himself. A smile hung in the corner of his mouth. He opened the apron of his cab as if to descend, at which the Anarchist waved him a dramatic farewell and strode off towards Waterloo Bridge, carefully jostling his infected body against as many people as possible. The Bacteriologist was so preoccupied with the vision of him that he scarcely manifested the slightest surprise at the appearance of Minnie upon the pavement with his hat and shoes and overcoat. "Very good of you to bring my things," he said, and remained lost in contemplation of the receding figure of the Anarchist.

"You had better get in," he said, still staring. Minnie felt absolutely convinced now that he was mad, and directed the cabman home on her own responsibility. "Put on my shoes? Certainly, dear," said he, as the cab began to turn, and hid the strutting black figure, now small in the distance, from his eyes. Then suddenly something grotesque struck him, and he laughed. Then he remarked, "It is really very serious, though.

"You see, that man came to my house to see me, and he is an Anarchist. No—don't faint, or I cannot possibly tell you the rest. And I wanted to astonish him, not knowing he was an Anarchist, and took up a cultivation of that new species of Bacterium I was telling you of, that infest, and I think cause, the blue patches upon various monkeys; and, like a fool, I said it

was Asiatic cholera. And he ran away with it to poison the water of London, and he certainly might have made things look blue for this civilized city. And now he has swallowed it. Of course I cannot say what will happen, but you know it turned that kitten blue, and the three puppies—in patches, and the sparrow—bright blue. But the bother is I shall have all the trouble and expense of preparing some more.

"Put on my coat on this hot day! Why? Because we might meet Mrs. Jabber. My dear, Mrs. Jabber is not a draught. But why should I wear a coat on a hot day because of Mrs.— Oh! *very* well."

BUFORD[1]

By MILLARD FILLMORE WILLIAMS

THROUGHOUT the winter of 1890-1891 I was engaged in teaching a backwoods school in one of the central counties of Mississippi. The school-house was situated some ten or fifteen miles from the county site, in a community thickly settled though not so densely populated as some of the rural districts in the older states.

I began my work on the first Monday in November, the time designated in that part of the state for the opening of the schools. When I arrived at the one room frame building early on the morning appointed, I found awaiting me a number of the patrons, the trustees, and fifty or sixty pupils of both sexes and all sizes. I was a stranger to them all, having been recommended to them by a friend of mine who lived in that vicinity then, but whom I had known for several years previous in my native county. They received me cordially, my friend Sturtevant introducing me in a complimentary manner, and proposing to guarantee satisfaction on my part as teacher. I fancied that the trustees and patrons were favorably impressed with my opening exercises, and in the talk I made to them I urged upon them, among other things, the importance not only of making the house comfortable but of beautifying it. There was no enclosure about the building, and as cattle roamed at large they often trespassed on our domains, coming from a neighboring field from which the fence had been removed.

I said nothing to the patrons on this subject, but had a private talk with the trustees and asked them to build a fence around the yard immediately. I could not get them to promise to build it.

I noticed among the cattle a large bull, one of the finest I ever saw. When I came up, some of the little boys were riding him around, and the powerful beast seemed as gentle and kind as a dog.

---

[1] Reprinted by permission.

I had heard and read, however, so many accounts of these animals turning upon their keepers and goring them to death with their sharp horns, that the sight of the children playing with this specimen was to me too much like playing with dynamite. When I saw that I could not prevail upon the trustees to put an enclosure around the yard, I insisted that the cattle be removed. I was assured that after the crops were harvested the herds would be turned into the fields.

When I arrived the second day, I found some of the pupils on hand and, again, the cattle. Two of the youngsters were perched upon the back of the bull, whose name by the way was Buford, and the great creature was feeding about with as little concern as if they had been only two flies. Undoubtedly Buford was a favorite with every pupil, and when I noticed how kindly he received the pats of the boys, licking their hands in gratitude for a turnip or a carrot, I felt that possibly they knew him better than I, as the trustees had told me.

Then I recalled the many instances I had heard of these animals suddenly becoming vicious, and I thought I would act on the principle that caution is the parent of safety. I forbade the pupils to go about the cattle and when they came near the house—especially when Buford came—I made a point of driving them away. Buford did not seem to know what to make of this eviction; having been treated so long as a pet he, I verily believe, was astonished when I took a switch and drove him from the school premises.

Knowing that the children would seek opportunities to ride, when they were out of my sight, I called to see the bull's owner, Samuel Gladner, and insisted on his shutting Buford up in a field. He remonstrated at first, assuring me of the harmlessness of the animal, telling me that he was as gentle as a lamb, and that the children of the entire community had played with him. Finding that I still wished my request carried out, he agreed to put Buford in a pasture about a mile south of the school-house.

The next morning after I had opened school and was busy at work, I observed some of the small boys shedding tears. When I inquired the cause, they pointed to one of Gladner's hired men driving Buford away. All of the children seemed so much hurt at seeing their pet driven off, I felt a little sad myself. I tried to cheer them up, however, and told them some true stories of fatal accidents connected with powerful animals whose passions had

been aroused. My talk did not raise their spirits, but I was convinced I was right and I determined to be firm.

A few days after Buford had been driven away, my friend Sturtevant called at the school, and invited me to spend the next night with him. His wife, whose maiden name was Bessie Bowlin, was also an old friend, she and I having been schoolmates. In fact, I became acquainted with Sturtevant while he was courting Bessie. I gladly accepted the invitation.

The next evening, just before dismissal, Sturtevant drove up for me. When we arrived at his home, Miss Bessie—as I still called her—gave me a hearty reception and expressed herself as being pleased to see me. I was the first friend she had seen from our part of the state since she had married and come away.

We all enjoyed the evening, and I experienced relief from the homesickness I was beginning to feel. We talked about old times, George and Bessie's courtship days, and everything of interest to all of us, including the school. The conversation eventually touched upon Buford. I learned that my insisting on his removal from the school yard had made an unfavorable impression of myself, many of the patrons thinking I was afraid of cattle.

Before retiring at a late hour, we noticed a fire several miles to the north.

As I bade my host and hostess goodnight, I jocosely remarked to them that if I should be tardy next morning the trustees might forbid my visiting so far away again. Bessie quickly answered that we must not give them a pretext for anything of that kind, and since I was the only one of her home people in that part of the state I must come often. She had breakfast ready before dawn and as soon as it was light I left for the school. The morning air was cool and bracing and, preferring to walk, I declined Sturtevant's offer to drive me in his buggy. The idea that I had been sized up as a coward rather vexed me. The patrons, I thought, should see the matter as I did, because I was looking after the safety of their children—not that of myself. Thinking over the subject, I passed the field where Buford was confined. I saw him lying down, a hundred yards or so from the road, and I noticed that the field gate was open. There was nothing to prevent his escape. I was about to walk over to close the gate, but the idea of my being afraid deterred me, and I decided to take no precautionary measures.

A half mile from this field, and a short distance from the

school, was a lane, some eighty rods in length. At the south end of this lane, the direction from which I was approaching, was a small creek across which was a wooden bridge. As I turned a bend in the road and started down the hill to the bridge, I passed a sweet-gum tree on which the limbs grew almost from the ground. Glancing at it, I smiled to think how easily one could run up it if pursued by Buford.

When I stepped on the bridge, I saw towards the other end of the lane a large black horse. He saw me about the same time, gave a loud neigh, pawed the earth, and galloped fiercely in my direction. I had never known a horse to attack any one, and I did not know what this one meant. If he really was vicious, and I should walk on there was no chance for me, for the fence on each side of the road was so low that the horse would have no trouble in leaping over it. He was coming on rapidly. Could it be possible that a dangerous horse, of which I had heard nothing, was allowed to roam free? If I should run and somebody see me, there would be no doubt about my lack of courage. Besides, it might be a practical joke, to determine how I would act. All these thoughts passed through my mind, believe me, more quickly than I have written them. Now the horse was within fifty yards of me, and I had a full view of the savage steed. He was a large black stallion and would weigh quite fifteen hundred pounds. His long black mane waved wildly over his head, his nostrils were distended, and his eye glared like that of a maniac.

There was no time to lose. I ran rapidly back and just as I reached the sweet-gum, the brute's hooves struck the bridge. I climbed the tree as quickly as a squirrel, but none too quickly—I was barely out of reach before the pursuer dashed up. He reared on his hind feet, tried to reach me and, finding that he could not, gave vent to his rage in squeals that were blood-curdling.

Even then, I half suspected that I was the victim of a jest and I listened to hear some one laugh! But the exhibitions of rage the horse was making, his wild and desperate efforts to reach me soon satisfied me there was no joke about it and that I should have been trampled to death if I had delayed a half-minute longer.

I looked at my watch. It was only half an hour until school-time. Within ten or fifteen minutes the pupils would begin to assemble. A small hog came walking down the road. The hope that the stallion would chase it and so give me a chance to escape

occurred to me. But even as I hoped, the horse saw the hog, made a wild dash at it, struck it with his fore-feet, and smashed it to the earth. The poor thing quivered a moment and died. The horrible beast picked it up with his teeth, shook it as a bull-dog shakes a rat, dashed it to earth again and returned to the tree.

I looked at my watch again—twenty-seven minutes to school-time. A dozen or more of the children traveled that road. They would be along in a few minutes and if this infuriated animal saw them he would surely kill one or more of them. Because of the bend in the road they would be near before I could give warning. Could I make them understand? If the stallion attacked them I was powerless, but I found by striking him with a switch cut hurriedly from a bough that I could redouble his efforts to get at me. Thus I hoped I might continue to hold his attention. If he should see them first—! The cold chills crept over me and I suffered an anxiety I hope never again to experience at the probability of chances in the mad brute's favor.

"I will die with them!" I heard myself exclaiming. Then a picture of my mother and sisters flashed before me—how could they bear to see me brought home a mangled corpse? And my death could do no good. Yet I could never see that brute attack one of those children. He must first kill me. . . . . It seemed I had been in the sweet-gum tree for hours, and when I again looked at my watch I was amazed to see that only four minutes had passed. In spite of the strain, part of my mind was keenly aware of the resinous leaves and I found myself teasing the wildly pawing horse to a mental chant, "Sweet-gum: *liquidambar styraciflua* of the family *Hamamelidaceae*." My ears, too, were alert, but apart from the breathing and hoof-beats of the horse, I had heard only an early crow caw-cawing across the fields.

My heart leaped and sank again as I heard something around the bend. Still teasing the horse, I watched and saw—Buford! He was ambling along quietly, chewing his cud, and never in my life have I seen anything that looked so friendly. He was almost opposite my tree before the horse saw him, gave that indescribable, brutish squeal and charged. Buford seemed not the least alarmed but braced himself for the onslaught. The infuriated stallion knew how to attack. Instead of rushing on the horns of his antagonist he leaped to one side with the agility of a cat and, before the bull could turn, had seized him by the neck, keeping

himself alongside. I suppose this desperate hold lasted not half a minute, but to me it seemed a long time.

Maintaining his position and his grip on the bull's neck, the stallion had an advantage that appeared all too favorable. But the bull's astonishment had shifted to a sense of combat; his eyes rolled, his great neck bulged, his legs stood taut, he bellowed deeply and slowly heaved upward his huge back. Even in my anxious state, I remember thinking I had never seen two more perfect examples of rage and strength.

By a supreme effort, Buford succeeded in breaking the hold of his antagonist, whose teeth popped like the jaws of some powerful machine. Before the stallion could seize him again the bull, now in a towering fury, rushed upon his foe with his keen horns. He struck the stallion just back of the fore-legs and ripped him to the flank. The stallion gave a final squeal, almost human in its agony, and fell to the ground. The bull continued to gore him, undisturbed by the kicks made in the throes of death.

When the horse ceased to struggle, the bull—as if he realized that his enemy was dead—started on towards the school-house. He had not seen me. As he walked off, I called, "Buford! Buford!" With the obedience of a dog, he turned and came up to me. I hurried down from the tree, ran to him, and wondered how I could show penitence for my former treatment of him. The good dinner that Bessie Bowlin put up for me that morning was still swinging in the basket on my arm: I shared it with Buford then and there. He relished, I thought, a red apple most of all.

I went on to the school-house, had seated myself and was excitedly reviewing the fight when two horsemen, a white man and a negro—rode up to the door.

The white man asked me if I had seen a large black horse pass the school-house that morning. I suppose my appearance gave him to understand that I knew something as he added, before I had time to answer, "Has he done any mischief?"

"None that I know of," I replied, "nor is he likely to do any." I then gave him an account of my adventure, and of the battle between the stallion and Buford. He was thankful, he said, that the termination had not been worse. He explained to me that he was the owner of the stallion, which nobody ever handled except the negro man. The animal was kept in a lot a half-mile or so from the owner's residence, but not far from the cabin of his

keeper. There was a strong, high wooden fence around the enclosure, which the horse could not break or jump over. He had never attacked anybody—for the good reason, it seemed to me, that no one but his keeper, by whom he was easily controlled, ever went into the lot.

About a hundred yards from the stallion's lot was a large house, unoccupied. From some cause the house caught fire the night before and burned down. None of the people living near knew when it burned as they saw nothing of the fire and did not hear of it until after sunrise. It was this fire that my friends and I had seen the preceding night. Between the house and the lot was a strip of woods and, as the ground was covered with dry autumn leaves, the fire had burned to the fence and consumed it. The horse's stable, in the center of the lot, did not burn, but the door had not been closed. Fortunately, the road taken by the brute was an old, disused one and there was only one residence on it between the school-house and the home of the owner. No one at this place saw the horse when he passed, and he must have done so before day, meeting neither man nor beast.

The owner seemed to think I was entitled to compensation for my fright and wanted me to say that I would accept it. I declined, of course.

When the school-children gathered a few moments later, I told them of my narrow escape and of Buford's gallant fight with my assailant. They could not restrain their expressions of admiration for their favorite, nor did I try to repress their cheers and hurrahs. England never felt prouder of Wellington than did those schoolboys of Buford.

The report of my adventure soon spread over the community, and to my surprise I was regarded as a hero. I never could tell why; for I had moved out of the way, and Buford had done the fighting while I stayed up the tree. My friend Sturtevant said it was just the fortune of war. The fellows who do the fighting are forgotten, while some one who is in a place of safety while the battle rages goes down in song and story as a hero.

One thing is certain. Buford had no better friend than I from that time forth, and as long as I remained in the community he was the same kindly disposed animal.

NOTES

SAMUEL HOPKINS ADAMS

Born at Dunkirk, New York, January 26, 1871, the author of "The Long Tryst" took his A.B. degree twenty years later from the college that provides the setting for this story. On graduation from Hamilton he came to New York, where he worked a decade or so as reporter and special writer for the *Sun*. After serving on McClure's Syndicate and the staff of *McClure's Magazine*, he surrendered editorial work for the profession of writing. Among his publications are many novels and short stories. "The Long Tryst" was nominated for inclusion in this volume by a later Hamilton alumnus, Walter E. Peck. A college tale of sentiment and the supernatural, "The Long Tryst" should be studied for the clues or hints that suggest reincarnation and for the details by which the author proves his theme.

SHERWOOD ANDERSON

Sherwood Anderson, born at Camden, Ohio, September 13, 1878, inherited from his improvident father the love of story telling. After receiving an elementary school education, the boy sold newspapers, became a race track swipe, and later found a job as nail factory truckman. In *A Story Teller's Story*, he tells us that while he walked horses and rubbed down their legs, he was associated with a negro named Bert—probably the Burt of "I'm a Fool." Anderson served in the Cuban War, 1898, returned to study for a time in the college at Springfield, Ohio, and for years thereafter wrote advertisements. He has told us how, after he had a factory of his own, he stopped in the middle of a sentence dictated to his stenographer and walked out of the office forever. Throughout his boyhood he had played with fanciful scenes, he says, as other boys play with marbles; he had read much and, in the intervals of physical labor, had lived in a world of dreams and imagination. Now he became a teller of tales. His first published story was "The Rabbit-Pen" (July, 1914); his first novel, *Windy McPherson's Son* (1916). With *Winesburg, Ohio*

(1919) and *The Triumph of the Egg* (1921), he achieved international recognition as a foremost American realist. After living for some time in New York, he moved to a small town in Virginia, where he publishes two weekly newspapers and writes for recreation.

"I'm a Fool," growing out of the author's experiences, has been praised for its fidelity to life through the point of view and diction of the swipe, and for the characterization so artlessly unfolded. Instructors who proposed this story for the present volume recommend it, in addition to the reasons already stated, for the instance of the lie, dramatic, non-didactic and, therefore, more effective than a sermon.

STEPHEN MOREHOUSE AVERY

Born at Webster Grove, Missouri, December 20, 1893, Stephen Morehouse Avery comes of Yankee ancestry and a rebel grandmother, whom the first Stephen Morehouse discovered in Richmond, Virginia. After a course in a St. Louis high school, young Avery went to the State University at Columbia, where he wrote for college publications and was a member of Dr. Ramsay's short story course. On leaving Columbia, he followed the trail of Anderson and Dreiser in writing advertisements until the United States entered the World War, when he enlisted. He saw action in the air service for some months and is credited with shooting down two German airmen, "doubtless better fellows than I was." On returning from the front, he took up writing and has published over a hundred stories, many of them based on his experiences in France. He has a home on Long Island, but lives much of the time abroad. "Never in This World" was suggested for this collection by Miss Isabel Walker, who first read it in *Collier's Magazine* and, as a member of the O. Henry Memorial committee of readers, recommended it for *O. Henry Memorial Prize Stories, 1928*. Its novelty of theme and its delicate sentiment rank it high among stories of father and daughter. To create for a child a world in one that is obviously not a little child's world requires something of the divine in fatherhood; to create such a world for a child that is doomed requires even more of divine unselfishness. How well Paul Dodd succeeded the climax reveals. No story has transformed more beautifully the stone and mortar of New York City into the palaces of fairyland. The author's

testimony is hardly needed, though it has been expressed, that the story was written from within, out.

MARIEL BRADY

Mariel Brady, whose ancestors aided in the settlement of Stamford, Connecticut, is the daughter of the late Captain Edwin L. Brady, U.S.N., and the descendant on her mother's side of one Humphrey Roberts, a Welshman, who composed his own hymns, words, and music and sang them in the village choir. Miss Brady gave up a college course at Vassar, for which she had fitted herself, to remain with her invalid mother. In the quiet of the long evenings, she began to make interesting things happen on paper, and had published a number of stories before conceiving the idea of the Genevieve Gertrude tales. Her work in the Royle School, Darien, Connecticut, was directly responsible for this idea; her absorption of Thackeray and Dickens in early childhood strengthened a buoyant sense of humor, which throughout attends the development of the idea. For its rollicking picture of life in the suburban school room, for its symmetry in the easy dramatizations ending with the advent of Mrs. Bayard Livingston Jones and Genevieve Gertrude's subsequent impersonations, for suspense and climax, this story first proved successful when read before a class at Columbia University. It has been published and republished many times, and is here reprinted for the reasons suggested.

ALICE BROWN

A native of Hampton Falls, New Hampshire, where she was born December 5, 1857, Alice Brown received her education from the district school and from Robinson Seminary in Exeter. She taught a few years but early turned to writing and holds today an honored place among literary historians of New England. Her first collection of stories, *Meadow Grass* (1895), began a study of neighborhood characters continued in *Tiverton Tales* (1899), *The County Road* (1906), and *Country Neighbors* (1910). Her later work is more cosmopolitan, as may be seen from *Vanishing Points* (1913), *The Flying Teuton* (1918), and a number of novels, though she is still at home with her early characters and scenes. Except for trips abroad, on one of which she walked through

England with her friend the poet, Louise Imogen Guiney, she has lived most of her mature years in Boston. "A Day Off," chosen by six teachers for inclusion here, dramatizes in carefully wrought scenes a theme which in the hands of one less skilful might have been too didactically developed, and conveys character adequately through these scenes. The lightly touched love interest aids the simple plot by providing motive and climax for Abby's self-struggle. The story should be compared with "I'm a Fool" for similarity of theme but for difference in local color, atmosphere, style and treatment of subject.

HENRY CUYLER BUNNER

Henry Cuyler Bunner (1855-1896), a native of Oswego, New York, was educated in New York City where, after a short time in business, he became a journalist. His name is associated chiefly with *Puck,* the weekly magazine long esteemed the most humorous in America, and with Brander Matthews, who was frequently his collaborator and with whom he shared an interest in the French story form. Both men admired the technique and the brilliancy of the Gallic tale and both were influenced by such masters as Halévy, Coppée, and De Maupassant. Bunner paraphrased a number of De Maupassant's short stories, transferring the setting to America and changing the somber cynicism to a diverting lightness. "Zenobia's Infidelity," now nearly forty years old, was nominated for this book by a number of instructors who, appreciating humor, find in the pachyderm's affection for the doctor and in its comical termination the same mirth-provoking qualities relished by a preceding generation. Incongruity, contrast and novelty, joined to high spirits, are mainly responsible for the laughter that must accompany a first reading of the tale. Economy in portrayal of characters, in dramatization of scenes, and in the straight action gives to the episode a vividness that convinces, in spite of the bizarre situations.

ARTHUR WILLIS COLTON

Arthur Willis Colton, born May 22, 1868, in Washington, Connecticut, was prepared for college at the Gunnery, was graduated from Yale, 1890, and was granted his doctorate degree three years later from the same university. After teaching at Yale two

years, he gave up the academic life for literature and wrote many tales of adventure for the *Youth's Companion*. Later, he contributed to *Scribner's* and the *Century*. Since 1906 he has been librarian of the University Club, New York City. *The Delectable Mountains* (1901), *Tioba* (1903), and *The Belted Seas* (1905) are among his books. "The Spiral Stone" is a worthy example of success in brief achieved through atmosphere and suggestion. The whiteness of snow and stones, the ghostly characters, and the implied revelation which is the outcome—all contribute to the harmony of the easily moving tale. Without artifice, a theme old and universal is touched at the poignant moment of climax in a manner Hawthornesque yet wholly novel.

RICHARD CONNELL

Richard Connell, of Poughkeepsie, New York, was not quite twenty-two when he received his A.B. degree from Harvard in 1915. A reporter for one year and writer of advertising for another, he went overseas soon after America entered the World War and took part in four battles. In the final year of the War, he was editor of the 27th Division magazine. After he was mustered out, he took up his pen as a free lance, and soon became one of the most prolific story writers of the day. He is best known as a humorist, in such tales as "A Friend of Napoleon," which was awarded an O. Henry Memorial prize for the year 1923, or "The Sin of Monsieur Pettipon" (1922). On occasion, however, he can be grim enough. "The Most Dangerous Game" was selected for its frankly melodramatic business of unexpected situations, its thrilling suspense, and the demonic character of General Zaroff.

JAMES BRENDAN CONNOLLY

The earliest memories of James Brendan Connolly, who was born in Boston, 1868, are of days along the harbor front and of roaring fellows coming ashore from men o' war. He went to the public and parochial schools of Boston, studied for a time at Harvard, from 1892 to 1895 was with the Engineers' Corps at Savannah, Georgia, and in 1896 won the first modern Olympic championship at Athens. Two years later he was in the Cuban War, and took part in the siege at Santiago. In 1907-1908 he served in the Navy. His interest in the World War is reflected

in *The U-Boat Hunters* (1918) and *Hiker Joy* (1920). *Out of Gloucester* (1902), his first collection of short stories, was followed by a number of volumes, among which are *The Deep Sea's Toll* (1905), *An Olympic Victor* (1908), *Open Water* (1910), *Head Winds* (1916), and *Tide Rips* (1922).

"The Trawler" won first prize in *Collier's* $2,500 short story contest, 1914. The judges were Mark Sullivan (the editor), Ida M. Tarbell, and Theodore Roosevelt. Its "elevation of sentiment, rugged knowledge of rugged men, strength and finish of writing," gave it first place with the ex-President; its "excellence as a picture of life on the sea at the beginning of the twentieth century," and its understanding of human nature were praised by Mr. Sullivan. The story was nominated for this volume by Professor Emma K. Temple, who has said of it elsewhere, "The tale is told with characteristic simplicity. . . . The movement is direct, swift, and inevitable. . . . Mr. Connolly has created a strong emotional effect by the use of suggestion and restraint. . . . As the story progresses inexorably toward its climax, a vivid description of the stormy sea grips the reader with its realism and holds him in suspense. . . . Mr. Connolly has conceived and wrought out the heroic character of Hugh Glynn so superbly that one feels certain the story will hold a secure place in literature."

JOSEPH CONRAD

The greatest writer of the sea in the long annals of English literature was a Czech, Teodor Jozef Konrad Korzeniowski, born in South Poland, December 6, 1857. He moved at the age of four years with his father and mother to Warsaw, whence for political reasons his father was banished (1862) to Vologda. After the death of his mother in 1865, Jozef returned to the Ukraine to live with his uncle, until his father was freed from exile (1869). Father and son lived in Cracow a short time before the death of the older man. Early in youth Joseph Conrad, as he was to become known, resolved to sail the seas in the English merchant service. After voyaging to the Mediterranean and the West Indies, he went (1874) to Marseilles, thence (1878) to England. After a few months in coast service, Conrad shipped before the mast, October, 1878, to Australia. For sixteen years he served the sea, ascending the ranks until in 1884 he became master. Invalided in 1894, he took out *Almayer's Folly,* begun

in 1889 and finished in the years following, and sent it to a publisher. It appeared in 1895 and was succeeded by the list of works that have made the name of Conrad famous in all quarters of the earth. Among his best-known novels are *The Nigger of the Narcissus* (1899), *Lord Jim* (1900), *Youth* (1902), *Nostromo* (1903), *Victory* (1910), *Chance* (1914) and *The Arrow of Gold* (1919). Most of his shorter tales are to be found in *Tales of Unrest* (1898), *A Set of Six* (1908), from which "The Brute" is taken, *Within the Tides* (1916), and *Tales of Hearsay* (1925). These stories and novels reflect the author's life in the Congo, the West Indies, China, India, the Malay Archipelago, Australia, South America, the Red Sea, Russia, France, Spain, and England. He did not visit North America until a year or so before his death, which occurred at his home in Kent, August, 1924.

"The Brute" is reprinted here to illustrate the author's peculiar power of suggesting the "something sentient which seems to dwell in ships." So well does he convey the anthropomorphic nature of the *Apse Family,* he induces in his reader a feeling of fearful antagonism toward the villain vessel. Suspense in the opening six pages ends in a surprise which, after the reader has recovered from shock, galvanizes attention anew. The long list of fatalities to the discredit of the *Apse Family,* "sanguinary female dog," prepares for the gruesome climax: "that anchor, tipping over, rose up like something alive; its great, rough iron arm caught Maggie round the waist, seemed to clasp her close with a dreadful hug, and flung itself with her over and down. . . ." And the dénouement convinces that the right woman had come to put an end to the *Apse Family.* "The Brute" is included here also because Conrad had a particular regard for *A Set of Six,* and was eager to have it receive recognition. In the copy inscribed for his biographer, Richard Curle, he wrote: "I consider this a collection of no mean tricks." Mr. Curle says it was the artistic, rounded unity of the volume which appealed to its author.

THEODORE DREISER

Regarded by many critics the foremost living American novelist, Theodore Dreiser was born at Terre Haute, Indiana, August 27, 1871. From parochial and public schools he went to the state university for a year; but, finding that what he learned bore no

relation to life, he left for Chicago. In 1892 he began work on the Chicago *Globe,* and subsequently was a reporter in St. Louis. In 1900, after indifferent success at his first story writing, Mr. Dreiser published *Sister Carrie,* the reception of which was not such as to urge him immediately to attempt another novel. He tried his hand at plays, poetry, and advertising until 1905, when he became editor of *Smith's Magazine.* For three years (1907-1910), he was editor-in-chief of the Butterick publications. In 1911 the publication of *Jennie Gerhardt* established his fame, which grew rapidly by his later work. Among his novels are *The Financier* (1912), *The Titan* (1914), *The Genius* (1915), *An American Tragedy* (1925), also produced as a play; among his collections of stories are *Free* (1918), *Twelve Men* (1919), and *Chains* (1927). I wrote for the New York *Times,* May 11, 1919: "*Twelve Men* marks a triumph in the study and delineation of living personalities. . . . The magnitude of the achievement by which the author captures and then sets free these specimens strikes a feeling of awe. It differs from laboratory dissection and reconstruction, as it differs from a facile reflection of the external. It is life." In the mayor Mr. Dreiser employs every means of vitalizing character; he describes, analyzes, makes his character act to the end that picture, anecdote, incident, and the main struggle are welded into a perfect unity. The struggle, one not uncommon to American cities, exemplifies the author's realistic treatment of his subject.

ANATOLE FRANCE

Jacques Anatole Thibault, better known as Anatole France, was born in Paris, 1844. He was interested at the early age of seven by *The Lives of the Saints,* read to him by his mother. "The Juggler of Notre Dame" and "The Procurator of Judea" probably owe their origins to impressions then received. His father was a bookseller, in whose shop the boy read widely. He observed well in his roaming about Paris; he studied well at college, where he became an excellent Latin and Greek scholar. Critical work, followed by many poems, preceded his first novel, *The Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard,* published when he was thirty-seven. Before his death in 1924, he had written voluminously, not only novels and short stories but much as a publicist, who believed in the cause of the Socialists. A man of letters, he made

in his philosophy of "enlightened skepticism" his greatest contribution to the literature of his age.

"The Procurator of Judea" was chosen for this book by two instructors (one a Jewess, the other a Gentile) who admire its provocation to thought and its haunting implications. They are inclined to agree with John Cournos that it is one of the fifteen finest short stories ever published. The closing line, nonchalantly dropped by the Procurator, becomes one of the most dramatic in nearly two thousand years of time. Pontius Pilate was concerned about matters that had blasted his reputation, matters now forgotten; he was not concerned about a matter, a matter he had forgotten, which has made his name a byword in these two thousand years. Only by his final sentence is this study epigrammatically completed.

ZONA GALE

Zona Gale, a native of Wisconsin (born at Portage, August 26, 1874), entered the profession of story writer and novelist through the door of journalism. After serving the Milwaukee papers she came to New York, where she was a member of the *World* staff from 1901 to 1904. After a book or two of romantic characteristics, her *Friendship Village* tales appeared, stories showing kinship with Mary Wilkins Freeman's New England sketches. *Miss Lulu Bett,* awarded the Pulitzer prize in 1920, and produced successfully on the stage, illustrates her realism at its best. "White Bread" conveys well the neighborhood atmosphere and the daily lives of people who inhabit Katy Town. Like "A Day Off" and "A Tale of Negative Gravity," this story serves also to illustrate the plot of simple complication.

O. HENRY

William Sidney Porter, better known as O. Henry, was born at Greensboro, North Carolina, September 11, 1862. Easily the leader of short story writers in the first decade of the twentieth century, he died before the end of that decade, June 5, 1910. Much has been said in praise of him; lately, more has been said against his influence, which is regarded the source of cheap surprise, smart economy, and over-democratization. It is true that many have imitated him; it is also true that no other has

equaled him in his province, the boundaries of which he himself fixed. The tragedy of his life is directly responsible for his unparalleled success. Convicted of embezzling funds while he was teller of the National Bank at Houston, Texas, he was sent (March 25, 1898) to the penitentiary at Columbus, Ohio. His first short story had been accepted, December, 1897, after the death of his wife in July. In the long hours of imprisonment—he served three years of his sentence—were developed the abilities of the man who had written, chiefly, humorous bits and sketches for weekly newspapers. In 1902, O. Henry came to New York, where he wrote and published at an amazing speed. In three years he wrote for the *World* over one hundred and forty stories. He liked to call New York "Little Old Bagdad by the Subway," and he liked to write about certain types of the four million who had not been exploited. He resented, however, the idea that a given place or locale is necessary for a successful story and wrote "A Municipal Report" to prove otherwise. It illustrates, by its title and apparently inconsequential "municipal report" interpolations, a unique instance of technique. The plot is skilfully concealed, like a skeleton, by the flesh and blood, the nerves and sinews of the composition.

HENRY JAMES

Born in New York City, 1843, Henry James became before his death in 1915 one of the greatest writers of his period. He was not only an artist, he was a self-conscious artist; every line of his many stories and novels was done with the skill of the conscious technician. Educated abroad, he traveled on the continent and settled in England, where, except for brief visits home, he lived over forty years. Before he died he paid his adopted country the tribute of becoming an English citizen.

"The Real Thing" was chosen for this collection because it is a masterly lesson in the problems of the artist, whether of the brush or of the pen, and for its characterization working to plot symmetry through dominance of theme. The artist prefers the represented subject to the real one; "the defect of the real one was so apt to be a lack of representation. I liked things that appeared; then one was sure." Every editor knows the story submitted by the hopeful writer with the guarantee, "It is all true!" The story true in real life rarely seems true in the repre-

sentation of real life. . . . The characters of the Major and Mrs. Monarch (so excellently named) were the real thing; their defects were that in their representation they could not appear real. Contrariwise, the cockney Miss Churm and the Italian vendor, Oronte, who were not at all the real thing, in the sense the Major and his wife approved, on occasion could represent adequately enough the real. The symmetry of plot follows: the real thing, in the persons of the Major and his wife, descends to the humble work of servant; whereas the servant, represented by the two models, ascends to the rank of nobility through the medium of art. A pseudo-exchange of class characteristics is effected with skill, directed by the author's conviction of the truth in his theme.

ELISE JEAN JERARD

Elise Jean Jerard was born, 1902, in New York City. "I was educated in the Hunter system," she writes, "from kindergarten upwards." She entered the college in 1919, where she specialized in languages and took, among other courses in English, one in the short story. Graduated in 1922, with Phi Beta Kappa honors, she spent some time in the West, where she found life stimulating to her love for telling tales. Married to an architect, again living in New York, she is interested in the arts and sciences and follows writing as a profession. "The Second Egg" is a recent instance of the tremendous trifle, which has been exemplified many times—notably in "A Piece of String" (De Maupassant)—but never more aptly and realistically.

NUNNALLY JOHNSON

Nunnally Johnson, born thirty years ago, in Columbus, Georgia, is a newspaper man, who sold his first short story after 1920. He served in the army three years, though not overseas, and came to New York. Here he has worked on the *Herald-Tribune* and the *Evening Post.* He commands a large number of readers through his humor, apparent in news column no less than fiction. "The Actor," selected for *O. Henry Memorial Prize Stories, 1928,* illustrates his gift for satire; "Good Old Uncle Homer" is in the same vein. This story was chosen for its humorous dramatization of one day in the life of a child, for the

struggle in which the child bears off honors, and for the satire directed against theorists represented by Homer.

ROSE WILDER LANE

Rose Wilder Lane, born in Dakota Territory, December 5, 1887, comes of a long line of people journeying west. She once lived in San Francisco for seventeen months, her record for settling down. While there she began her literary work on the *Bulletin,* under the direction of Fremont Older, managing editor, by writing life stories of detectives, criminals, engineers, actors, and other representatives of the social order. A capital instance of her earlier writing of this kind was about Jack London; more recent examples are "Henry Ford's Own Story" and "The Making of Herbert Hoover." During the World War she was publicity agent in London for the Red Cross. Since then and before she has lived in France, Poland, Germany, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Hungary, Italy, Albania, Egypt, Anatolia, Palestine, Syria, Mesopotamia, Persia and Russia. Much of the time she is in Albania, or in Missouri. "Innocence" illustrates perfectly the use of a given point of view and unswerving adherence to that point of view. The facts of the story are horrible, but seen dimly through the mind of Mary Alice they become charged with super-horror. For Mary Alice sees as through a glass darkly. That the adult reader may perceive clearly the truth back of the child's groping becomes the artist's problem. Never does the author forget the child's limitations, never does she lose her sense of the struggle between the conflicting elements, never does she leave the reader in doubt except the doubt that arises legitimately from well-managed suspense.

GUY DE MAUPASSANT

Guy de Maupassant, born August 5, 1850, near Dieppe, came of a family ennobled in the time of Maria Theresa. For a number of years his mother, friend of Flaubert, had been interested in literature. Having decided quite early that her son was to be a writer, she trained him to observe, and to read the great authors; she also gave him an excellent education. After a period of preparation (1871-1880), Guy worked at the Ministry of the Navy and in the Department of Education while he also

studied with Flaubert and met such men of letters as Zola, Daudet, Taine, Renan, and Coppée. He was leisurely in acquiring the tools and technique of his art, causing his mother to fear he was forgetting his high destiny; but, even after he was ready to publish, Flaubert held him back, lest he make a flash in the pan. Though he published verse (under a pen-name) before 1880, not until that year did he appear with a story—"Boule de Suif." The success of "The Tallow Ball" was so great as to turn the author definitely to fiction. In 1880 he resigned his post with the Ministry of Education and thereafter devoted himself to a life of letters. His income from his work enabled him to make long voyages, on which much of his writing was accomplished. He died insane, July, 1893, and was buried in Montparnasse Cemetery. Foremost of French story tellers, Maupassant recounts vividly events, in which one or two central incidents focus the drama of the tale to flash it into the dazzled eyes of the reader. Next to this power, his cynical portrayal of character and his irony of theme are his chief hall-marks. All three are illustrated in "Two Friends," translated for this collection by Professor Elizabeth Brownell Collier.

EDGAR ALLAN POE

The facts of Edgar Allan Poe's life are well known; but the dates of his birth and death may be set down again—January 19, 1809—October 7, 1849. Within these forty years his literary genius found expression in poetry, criticism, and fiction. Before he published the first of his stories, perhaps the work of no single author had been directed consciously to the end of effect or impression on the reader. Until he stated the principles he himself proclaimed in the review of Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales*, the short story in English was a form more or less amorphous. By defining its limits, its essence, its prerogative, he became the chief forerunner of the conscious school of artists in the brief tale. For fifty years most members of this school owed most to him for pointing the way, as for the next quarter century they owed most to O. Henry for indicating a turn in the way, as they owe most now to the men and women who seek to find an American form, distinctive from the form built (as Poe's form was built) on the English story. "The Cask of Amontillado" produces its effect through the melodramatic theme—walling up a living

man—through the motive of revenge, and through the undeviating operation of the motive to the end. It illustrates perfectly Poe's dictum that the short story should begin near the climax. No details of Fortunato's injuries are chronicled, not even the insult is recorded; yet they are conveyed, and made to appear sufficient for the monstrous revenge of Montresor. It further illustrates Poe's theory that no word should be written which does not contribute directly to the effect or impression sought.

EDGAR VALENTINE SMITH

Edgar Valentine Smith, born in Alabama, February 14, 1875, is a newspaper man who won with "Prelude" the O. Henry Memorial Prize of 1923. The greater part of his life has been spent in Alabama, Florida, and Georgia. From a worker in logging camp and sawmill he became a manufacturer in the lumber business. He published his first story at the age of fourteen, but labeled "author" by his schoolmates, he wrote no more for ten years. Since the age of twenty-five, however, he has written in the times he can snatch from work. He is now copy-reader and head-writer for the Birmingham *News*. "Prelude" bears on its surface the author's familiarity with the piney-woods region and the poor whites who inhabit it. Deeper acquaintance with the story reveals his careful study of Selina Jo. Plot-novelty lies in the reversal of a tale often retold—escape from prison or reformatory. Escape *into* a prison is a contradiction in terms; yet the treatment shows no epigrammatic intention. Progress from sordid realism to Selina Jo's pathetically humorous success in obtaining admission to the beautiful home convinces that the darker phase of the usual reformatory story becomes here the brighter side of the picture. The dialect is not stereotyped but true to time and place.

WILBUR DANIEL STEELE

Accidentally a native of Greensboro, North Carolina, where he was born March 17, 1886, Wilbur Daniel Steele is the son and grandson of theologians. With apparent lack of sequence he turned to art, after receiving his A.B. degree from the University of Denver (where his father still holds a chair), and studied in Boston, New York, and Paris. Encouraged to write stories, he

published (1911) "A Matter of Education" and (1912) "White Horse Winter." Tales of Urkey Island and of Provincetown followed, in all of which he declares his skill in conveying a mood, portraying local characters, in suggesting the color peculiar to his scenes, and in story architecture. He found his second stimulus in foreign scenes: Bermuda, the West Indies, the South Sea Islands, Africa—all have served him. Among his more recent stories are "The Man Who Saw through Heaven," "Bubbles," and "Blue Murder." He has received three prizes from the O. Henry Memorial Award Committee and his stories have been reprinted frequently in yearly anthologies. "Blue Murder" was chosen by a number of instructors for its economy, suspense, and fine use of suggestion. If at first reading the end is unguessed, none the less that end approaches inevitably, however shrouded it may appear. The air is full of omen, the succession of tragedies promises a final tragedy that will, somehow, explain the whole. When on second reading the clues become sun-clear, even to the double meaning of the title, the author's skill challenges admiration. For motive, for stupidity aptly enough ascribed, and for justice measured without patent contriving, this story has no equal in one of its length among all tales of crime.

FRANK STOCKTON

Although O. Henry has been praised and blamed for his success with the "trick" ending, the shock of surprise is as old as the oldest English ballads. Achievement of terminal shock in the modern short story suggests two names earlier than that of O. Henry—Thomas Bailey Aldrich and Frank Stockton. Stockton was born in Philadelphia in 1834, where he grew up and became a writer of children's tales. At the age of thirty-eight he came to New York, to test his powers in novels and short stories for adults. "The Lady or the Tiger?" made him—and unmade him, for he never pleased so well again the popular fancy. His chief characteristic, however, which is a sly and delicious humor, appears to better advantage in numerous other works, foremost among them being the one here included. The merit of the story lies, of course, in the delightful fooling with the force of gravity; but it illustrates also the tentative efforts of the earlier American story tellers to construct the right sort of

plot for a brief piece of fiction. The "love line of interest," rather too obviously introduced, offers a hint to the veriest tyro in experimentation.

RUTH SUCKOW

Ruth Suckow, of the mid-Western realist school, was born in Iowa, August 6, 1892. Daughter of a Congregational minister, she studied at Grinnell College (1910-1913), at the Boston School of Expression, and took her degree (1917) at the University of Denver. For some years she divided her time between Earlville, Iowa, where she owned an apiary, and New York City, where she wrote and marketed her wares. Of late, she has spent her time in California and New Mexico. After publishing a number of stories in magazines, she collected them in *Country People* (1924), a volume marked by the careful attention to detail exhibited in "The Little Girl from Town." *The Odyssey of a Nice Girl* appeared in 1925, followed by *The Bonney Family* (1927). A forthcoming novel is entitled *The Kramer Girls*. The story here reprinted was chosen for simplicity of theme, the perfect portrait of Patricia, and the numerous instances of contrast. In its accumulation of detail, stamping the picture unforgettably, the story offers the best example in the entire collection. Nor is the element of struggle lacking—the pathetic conflict between the child and the adult, with the odds all in favor of the grown-up. Patricia's specious victory is touched to poignancy by the matter-of-fact final line.

BOOTH TARKINGTON

Booth Tarkington was born at Indianapolis, Indiana, July 29, 1869. From Phillips Exeter Academy and Purdue University he proceeded to Princeton, where (1893) he took his first degree. In 1899 appeared *The Gentleman from Indiana*, one result of which was the acceptance by *McClure's Magazine* of the earlier written *Monsieur Beaucaire*. *The Two Van Revels* followed (1902) and *Cherry*, rejected seventeen times, was published in 1903. In these first works the leading characteristics are realism, touched by geniality, imagination, and humor; and romance made credible by details which give reality to the most airy vision.

Primarily realist and satirist, Mr. Tarkington was affected by the revival of romanticism through Stevenson, Churchill and others of the late 'nineties. *In the Arena* (1905), reflecting the author's knowledge of politics, appeared the same year with *The Conquest of Canaan* and *The Beautiful Lady*. Further books preceded *Beauty and the Jacobin* (1911), which marks a turning point in the author's manner and style. In *The Flirt* (1913) he proclaimed himself satirist at the same time he showed in Hedrick Madison his consummate knowledge of the small boy. This understanding he revealed again in *Penrod* (1914) and *Penrod and Sam* (1915), tales of pre-adolescents; equally clear insight into the mind and heart of the boy somewhat older he exhibits in *Seventeen* (1916) and *The Magnificent Ambersons* (1918). In *Alice Adams* (1921), *Gentle Julia* (1922), and *Women* (1925) he displays an uncanny acquaintance with the minds and habits of girls. In 1899 his alma mater conferred upon him the degree of Master of Arts, and in 1918 the degree of Doctor of Literature. He has twice received the Pulitzer Prize. "Little Gentleman" was recommended for this collection by a number of instructors, who admire the author's characterization of his small boys, his humorous account of the unique yet representative childhood epic—the Great Tar Fight, and his pleasant satire of the Rev. Mr. Kinosling.

H. G. WELLS

Herbert George Wells was born in Kent, 1868, and began life humbly enough in a draper's establishment. After preliminary schooling he studied science under Huxley and later took his degree from the University of London. His short stories on scientific subjects first brought him to public notice, such tales as those included in *Thirty Strange Stories* (1897). Today he is one of the great world figures in literature, whether that literature be concerned with social, religious, and political questions or with romance, fantasy, and imagination. Over a score of novels, a dozen or so fantastic romances, numerous short stories bound up in a half dozen volumes, and many other books proclaim the enormous fecundity and power of the man. *A Short History of the World* and *The World of William Clissold* are two of his more recent works that have incited wide discussion. "The Stolen Bacillus" illustrates the author's earlier interest in

science, his sense of humor, and his ability to make a good story out of a simple incident.

MILLARD FILLMORE WILLIAMS

Millard Fillmore Williams was born December 19, 1852, in Attala County, Mississippi. One of a large family, he spent his youth on a farm near Kosciusko, where he enjoyed the pleasures of boyhood before the Civil War. Before he was ten, however, he heard the guns of Shiloh and Corinth, and was roused to a sense of patriotism which developed his appreciation of history. In the troublous times following the downfall of the Confederacy, he built the basis of an education on which he rose high among state school masters. Frequently he contributed to the local press essays or timely articles. "Buford" he wrote a year or so before his death, July 17, 1900. The story, emphasizing the moment of struggle between bull and stallion, incidentally pictures the life of the Mississippi rural teacher in the closing decade of the nineteenth century.

(1)